

レジーナブックス  
Regina

しき  
Shiki

自称

悪役令嬢<sup>な</sup>  
婚約者の  
観察記録。



# **Observation Record of a Self-proclaimed Villainess' Fiance**

**– Jishou Akuyaku Reijou na Konyakusha no Kansatsu Kiroku –**

**- Volume 1 -**

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**[ Kimamani Translate | Elsyrrtrans ]**

## - STORY -

Lady Bertia, who's become my fiancée, is a bit odd.  
On our first meeting, she proclaimed herself a villainess noble girl who's been reincarnated and said that she's working hard every day to become a splendid flower of evil that's elegantly put in her place.

I don't get it.

But she entertains me because I don't understand.

That's why I think I'll observe her for a while.

This is a story of a crown prince who's so talented and handsome that he's grown bored of his easy-mode life.  
A story of this prince observing a self-proclaimed villainess noble girl (who seems perfect at first but is a bit off) who's become his fiancée as she snatches flags and breaks them into pieces.

## 登場人物 紹介

### クロ

パーティアのペットの黒狐。実はただの狐ではないようで――？

### ノーチェス侯爵

パーティアの父。おバカな娘の奇行に悩まされつつも、かなり溺愛している。

### ヒロニア

謎の小鳥を連れた男爵令嬢。パーティア曰く乙女ゲームの「ヒロイン」で、あの手この手を使ってセシルたち「攻略対象」に近づこうとする。

13歳

15歳

11歳

9歳

### クールガン

パーティアの遠縁の少年。乙女ゲームの「攻略対象」の一人で、セシルの側近候補でもある。

### ゼノ

セシルの侍従。主の腹黒な本性を知っており、必死に諫めつつも半ば諦めている。

### パーティア

セシルの婚約者。乙女ゲームの「悪役令嬢」を自称している。悪役らしく振る舞おうとするものの、全然なりきれていない残念な令嬢。

### セシル

アルファスタ国の王太子。パーティア曰く「攻略対象」の一人らしい。容姿端麗・頭脳明晰で何でも簡単にできてしまうため、日常を退屈に感じている。

# Chapter 1

## Bertia (8 years old)

I, Cecil Grau Alfaster, the first and crown prince of the Kingdom of Alfaster, met my fiancée for the first time when I was ten.

Lady Bertia Ibil Noches, a Marquis' daughter.

She had crimson hair and amber eyes. She was fair-skinned and slightly plump... actually, let me honest here. With notable characteristics like her fluffed-up dress and her snowman-like fat round body, she was a pig – I mean girl – from the prime minister's house.

She was two years younger than me. After we met each other for the first time with my father, the king, and her father, the prime minister, in attendance, we headed out to the garden. She then immediately said the following.

"Prince Cecil! I am a noble girl villainess! My role, after I start school at Halm Academy, is to break apart your relationship with a heroine you meet, then in the end have my engagement annulled and be put in my place!"

She shoves her finger in my face decisively and glares at me sharply.

Hm. I don't get it.

Her personal maids that had come along with her are paling... actually, let me amend that. Their expressions are more along the lines of "Oh dear. She did it after all," like they expected this to happen.

"However, it would injure my pride as a Marquis' daughter to be in an unsightly state, even if it's to help you two grow closer! And so, I have decided. I will become a first class flower of evil! And so, your Highness, please become a gentleman so lovely that I won't mind being put in my place by you!"

What should I do? I honestly don't understand what she's saying at all. Could this be because I'm still an immature child?



...Doesn't seem like it. My attendants' jaws have dropped open as they blink rapidly, after all.

Ah, but for now...

"Lady Bertia, standing around chatting is rather gauche. Shall we go sit and have tea while we talk?"

I smile sweetly and hold a hand out to her, deciding to invite her to a table where tea has already been prepared for us.

Though I'm still a child, I am someone who will eventually be responsible for an entire kingdom.

Let's begin by calmly cleaning up this mess.

Father always says that when you're in trouble, it's important to take a breath and calm down before dealing with the problem after all.

"...Y- yes, you're right."

Lady Bertia, looking rather bewildered at my words judging from her rapid blinking, obediently lets herself be escorted to the tea table. Perhaps she lost steam because of my calm attitude.

"Prince Cecil, aren't you a little too composed considering your age? Have you perhaps reincarnated?"

After taking a sip from a nice-smelling cup of black tea, Lady Bertia looks at me searchingly. She has a dollop of cream on her cheek from a cake – from a popular bakery – that had been brought out along with the tea.

...Could my fiancée have forgotten that I'm royalty?

It's not like we're old friends or anything – I think she's acting a little too casual.

Well, this is good too since it's more interesting than her being all weirdly nervous and tensing up.

"I don't know what you mean by 'reincarnated', but if you think that I'm composed for

my age, that's probably because I'm royalty, no? Royalty is taught to conduct themselves like that from a young age. It's natural," I respond, my smile not fading.

"Is that so?" she asks back, but she seems to accept my explanation even as she cocks her head to the side.

...Behind me, my naggy personal attendant Zeno is shaking his head. He always says things like "Even putting aside that you're royalty, your Highness, you look at things too long term," and "Let's do some more childlike things!" and "I think childlike cuteness is important as well at your age!". But I decided to ignore him.

"Alright then, now that we've calmed down a little, could you explain the things you were saying earlier in a way I'll understand? About the phrases like 'noble girl villainess', 'heroine', 'annulling the engagement', and 'being put in your place,'" I ask, requesting a more detailed explanation the moment she reaches out for a second cake.

...It's not like I care or anything, but even considering their relationship as master and servant, aren't her maids being a bit too lenient with her?

In regards to her manners in front of royalty and the amount she's eating.

"Yes, of course! I need you to become someone worthy of rejecting me after understanding my story fully after all, your Highness!"

Lady Bertia grips her fork tightly and looks at me seriously.

It seems like she hasn't realized that no matter how serious she looks, she won't be taken seriously with cream stuck around her mouth.



...It seems like I've overestimated my own power up until now.

It's a bit embarrassing to admit, but I always thought that I was fairly intelligent in comparison to other children my age.

My enrollment to Halm Academy, where many nobles of similar age gather, has already been decided, but that's mainly to increase my circle of influence and to learn how to interact with others as royalty. I've already learned everything there is to learn on an academic level at Halm Academy.

I had really thought that as a ten-year-old who's already learned up to an eighteen-year-old level that I could say that I was pretty smart.

But, how could this be? I cannot understand what this eight-year-old girl is saying in the slightest.

Even considering that she's terrible at explanations, I still can't understand.

"What I'm saying is that your Highness, you're going to meet this noble lady and be drawn to her innocent nature, eventually falling in love! Seeing your relationship, I become green with envy and start bullying that noble girl. After learning about this, you become furious and annul our engagement. This kicks off a chain of events that ends with the ruin of my family!"

Her passionate words are apparently all about "stuff that will happen in the future".

And apparently she had her... previous life's memories?... or something, and in those memories she saw... a novel that appeared with moving pictures?... that talked all about what was going to happen in the future.

Apparently there was also more... nitty gritty details?... or something, but she decided just to tell me the broad strokes today.

To be honest, I can't imagine that I'd annul an engagement with so many strong political reasons behind it because I went crazy with love or whatever, and at least at the moment, I really can't imagine the noble girl in front of me becoming green with envy.

There's so many holes in her story that my head's in a bit of a jumble.

The time set aside today was just to "see my fiancée face-to-face", so my tea-time with her is drawing to a close. And anyways, if she gives me any more new information, even I won't be able to parse through it all.

Ah, but there is one thing I want to double-check.

"Lady Bertia, could I ask just one question?"

"You can ask as many as you want. I've been waiting for this day where I tell you everything since my memories returned after all!"



I almost smile wryly at her words, considering that they were said right before we had to part.

To be honest, I don't care if she's just a bit delusional or she really has the power to see the future.

All I care about is...

"What kind of person would this 'first class flower of evil' you mentioned be?"

...this. This is the most important thing.

From this day on, she has technically become my fiancée.

As she's become my fiancée, in the future, she will become the Queen.

Ignoring the strange existence of this 'heroine', if being this "flower of evil" she mentioned means she isn't suited towards being a Queen, I'll need to train – I mean, lead her onto the correct path early-on. If that seems impossible, I'll need to consult with Father as soon as possible about breaking things off.

After all, I will be King in the future.

"That's obvious! She's strong, dignified, and beautiful! She's someone who makes her own path in life no matter what anyone says. Even if that path leads to ruin, she walks along it with no hesitation – a flower of evil! I'm going to become someone like that!"

"Strong, dignified, and *beautiful*... I see."

Let me apologize.

At that moment, I casually looked down at her stomach.

I had been a bit curious about what she thought about her own appearance, but she apparently hadn't noticed it at all... well, I won't be too harsh since I don't intend to explicitly berate her.

I did think that it was bad to look there with this timing considering what we were talking about, so I immediately looked back up at her face and smiled.

But it was too late.

She realized what I had been looking at.

And having realized, her face goes bright red.

“I – it’s not like that! Lady Bertia, Marquis’ daughter, is an underdog-type character so her appearance is kind of questionable.”

“‘Underdog’? That seems... like a sad existence. Are you alright with that?”

“N – no I’m not! That’s Bertia’s story – I’m... I’m... I’m not just Lady Bertia! I am myself! I will reach greater heights... I will become a more pure and good flower of evil!”

Is she losing control of herself?

I really feel like a pure and good flower of evil is an oxymoron, but it looks like she hasn’t realized this at all.

Bright red from head to toe, she stands up with a clatter.

“Y – your Highness. I will improve myself before coming again! I will take my leave now! Good day!”

She bows hurriedly and runs out before I could even think about stopping her. Afterwards, following their master’s lead, her maids bow hurriedly and leave as well.

I stared after her blankly until I couldn’t see her anymore.

“...What was with her?” I murmur.

“Your Highness, what will you do?” asks Zeno in response to my murmur.

His question didn’t mention about *what* I was going to do, but he’s probably talking about my engagement with her.

As royal marriages are usually arranged for political reasons, I won’t be able to do something about it immediately. But if I talk about how she acted today to my father, even if it took time, I would probably be able to bring up the topic of annulment using her “unsuited personality to be a Queen” as the reasoning.

But...

"She's kind of interesting, isn't she? And even though she's of noble birth, she isn't weirdly warped or twisted. She's straightforward so she's probably easy to control... I'll just observe her, she seems like she'll be fun for a while."

Somehow, I'm having fun for the first time in a while.

It's not like I've fallen for her in a romantic sense or anything, but how should I put it... dumb kids are cute? I've found a new toy?

...I don't really get it myself, but I am feeling more excited than I've ever felt before.

Generally, I can do anything if I try it once, so the world is rather boring to me.

I've almost never felt that feeling of satisfaction on successfully completing something that all the other kids have. My world has always seemed a bit dull and washed out to me.

But after meeting her today, my world has definitely become brighter.

This feeling of not knowing what's going to happen uplifts my spirits.

"Heh heh..."

Before I realize it, I'm smiling naturally.

This is a very rare occurrence for someone like me who's used to smiles being something you force onto your face.

"Your Highness, you look like you're having fun."

"Yes, I'm thinking that this feeling of uncertainty isn't bad. It uplifts my spirits."

"...You're free to have fun, but couldn't you have fun in a more childlike way?"

"But I *am* having some innocent fun, just like a child?"

"...Oh, right. You left behind your childishness in her Majesty the Queen's womb. I apologize for asking for the impossible."



“You really always say the rudest things. Well, I don’t mind. I’ll let it go since I’m in a really good mood right now.”

“Thank you very much.”

After glancing at Zeno, who lowers his head with a displeased expression, I turn my gaze back towards the direction she left in.

Just how much fun will she let me have, this girl who’s become my fiancée?

“Don’t let me down, okay?” I say quietly despite no longer being able to even see her.

I turn my head towards the sky and close my eyes.

## Chapter 2

### Bertia (9 years old)

I didn't see Lady Bertia again until winter of next year.

We are technically engaged.

I did invite her for tea a number of times in order to get to know each other better, but she was apparently undergoing medical treatment and was thus cooped up in a mansion on the House of Noches' domain.

I did ask her father Marquis Douglas Ibil Noches, who worked at the castle as the prime minister, about his daughter's condition a number of times, but every time I asked he would just paste a smile on an expression that looked like he was sucking a terribly sour lemon and tell me "My daughter is actually afflicted with an incurable disease (called stupidity)."

...There's not much point in him just slightly mouthing the words "called stupidity". I can still understand him perfectly well given that I'm mastered lip reading.

And anyways, if she was really afflicted with an incurable disease it would've been difficult for her to become my fiancée.

Even if I'm just a child, as royalty, I can conclude that much.

Also, since I was a little worried that it was my fault that she was staying cooped up in that mansion ever since our first meeting, I sent an 'envoy' over to her domain to investigate her condition.

The reports that this 'envoy' sends me every-so-often have become my number-one source of entertainment recently.

So I know all about how every day, from morning to night, she runs around outside near the mansion dressed as a young boy, you know?

Would a noble daughter undergoing medical treatment cry "Another two kilometres

to go!", drenched in sweat as she runs?

She waited for the day before my eleventh birthday before appearing in front of me.

"It's been a while, Prince Cecil! What, you can't tell who I am? I'm Bertia Ibil Noches. Your fiancée! Did you think I was someone else? You did, right!? What are you doing, Father!?"

"Prince Cecil, I apologize deeply for my idiotic daughter's actions. I will re-educate her."

She and her father, Marquis Noches, had been waiting in a room I often use to meet people in. The moment she saw me, she greeted(?) me with a wide smile.

From a certain point of view it was a cute, childlike reaction, but as a noble daughter and a crown prince's fiancée, I don't think it's acceptable.

Tears form in the corners of her eyes after Marquis Noches knocks her on her head with a fist. I can't help but smile wryly at the sight.

On a side note, Marquis Noches hitting her on the head isn't exactly right either, but I didn't really have the courage as a child to confront him about it what with his crazy-bright smile.

However, it would trouble me if he brought Lady Bertia back home and kept her cooped up again.

She's my source of entertain - fiancée that I've finally seen for the first time in a year, after all.

"No no, please don't worry about it, Marquis Noches. It's rather cute in a childish way, wouldn't you say?"

"Prince Cecil, you're unchildish as usual I see."

"I get that a lot," I say with the most childish smile I can muster. Marquis Noches smiles brightly in response.

Even as Lady Bertia holds her head - as that was where she had been hit - in her hands, she stares at me, blushing.



I'm not really proud of it, but girls often look at me like this.

Though well, my family, my father, and other attendants often say things like "I worry that he'll be a player in the future," or "How sly," or in contrast, "I'm looking forwards to seeing him as king."

"Y – your Highness, say that again – uh, could you please say that again?"

Lady Bertia had been so lively a second ago, but she suddenly started to fidget.

Not really understanding what she wants, I tilt my head to the side.

"Just now, you said that I was cute..." she says embarrassedly.

...Is 'cute in a childish way' a compliment in her mind?

Wait no, it's possible that some kind of weird filter is attached to her ears.

However... watching her fidget with flushed cheeks... well, I guess I could maybe kind of say that she's cute as a girl too?

"Bertia, you don't need to ask his Highness for that – I'm always telling you that you're cute. Be satisfied with that," the marquis interrupts hurriedly on seeing Lady Bertia's reaction. He seems startled.

It's true that begging royalty to call her cute isn't something acceptable as a noble daughter.

But... isn't it asking a bit much from her to give up on being called cute by her fiancée? Just because her father calls her cute?

"But Father, you always add on 'because you're a dumb kid' after you call me cute. It doesn't make me very happy. And also... it just feels different when a handsome guy tells me that I'm cute!"

"Bertia..."

Marquis Noches looks at Lady Bertia like she's a disappointment of a child.

I almost look at the two of them like *they're* a disappointment of a father-child pair...

but I do my best to keep my smile from fading.

I'm not sure about her whole 'handsome guy' thing, but like she says, Marquis, I don't think that "You're cute because you're a dumb kid" is a better compliment than "You're cute in a childish way."

Maybe if you were just talking with your wife, but if you said it to the person in question, I don't think it would be strange for them to take it as an insult.

"Y – your Highness, I do believe my daughter is in need of re-education and a firm talk from her parents after all, so we'll take our leave here..."

"Rest assured, Marquis Noches. That's just what makes your daughter special. It's endearing, wouldn't you say?"

He's trying to separate us with the excuse of re-education, but I stop him with a light shake of my head.

I don't know if it's just that he wants to stop his daughter from embarrassing herself in front of the crown prince or he's just overprotective and doesn't want to let me have his daughter... but either way, I won't let you separate us.

I've been so bore – lonely because I've barely been able to meet my fiancée, after all.

And also, I need to judge for myself whether she's worthy of being my fiancée, the future queen of the kingdom.

"Your Highness..." the two of them say in unison.

However, their tones of voice were the exact reverse of each other. One was a somewhat enchanted, ecstatic tone of voice, while the other was... an apologetic tone on the surface, but on the inside sounded like he was about to click his tongue at any moment.

Marquis Noches was apparently fairly good at his job, but in private, he seems to be unable to hide his emotions in the slightest.

No wait, perhaps he's purposefully showing his emotions?

"Marquis Noches, you're to meet my father after this, correct? Would it be alright for

me to invite her to tea during the time?”

“No, I refu -”

“- Yes, with pleasure!”

The moment the marquis, looking sour, tries to refuse my invitation, Lady Bertia interrupts him with her agreement.

Marquis Noches, I can still hear your tongue clicking clearly no matter that smile pasted on your face, you know?

“Thank you very much. Please let me talk with her about tomorrow as well,” I thank, purposefully pretending that I hadn’t heard Marquis Noches’ refusal.

Sticking on ‘talk about tomorrow’ means that the marquis probably can’t refuse anymore.

Tomorrow is my birthday.

As Lady Bertia and I are both still young, we haven’t made an official social debut yet, but as I’m the star of tomorrow’s birthday party, my fiancée Bertia will be my partner.

In a way this is a practice session in order to become grown-up royalty.

As it’s the crown prince’s birthday, it is a public party, but we’re still children who haven’t made our official social debut. Part of the reason for the party is to get us used to these kinds of situations while small mistakes on our part will still be forgiven.

From my prior investigations, she’s apparently mastered proper etiquette in public events, but it will be her first time appearing in an official public event.

Though it’s fairly obvious that I’d back her up, as I’ve attended many such events since I was young and have gotten used to them, it’s probably best to talk with her about it beforehand just in case.

Adding that implication to my words means that the marquis can’t easily refuse.

It’s a favour from a royal. Of course he can’t refuse.



“As you’re aware, your Highness, my daughter is very incompetent– incompetent – incompetent, but I leave her to you. I believe she will often act disgraceful, but she’s still young – please, please be merciful.”

To summarize – “You know that she’s useless, right? You were the one that said that you were okay with that, right? So even if she does some idiotic things, you’ll wave them away as ‘childish mistakes’, right?” – I guess?

Well, I just want to talk with her. I’m planning to order everyone away before we talk anyways, so I don’t really care so long as it’s interesting.

“Of course. She’s my fiancée, after all. Rest assured – if something happens, I will back her up.”

In order to show the marquis that I understood his implications as well, I look at him straight in the eyes with a smile and slowly nod.

“If a talented... no, a genius and renowned person like you says that, then I feel reassured. Bertia, Prince Cecil may say that he’ll back you up, but you still need to watch out for yourself on your own.”

“Yes! Of course, Father!” responds Lady Bertia, uselessly cheerful.

The marquis gazed at me worriedly for a while, but he probably understood from my gaze that I was taking her on while fully aware of the meaning hidden behind his words.

“I will leave her to you then,” he says, bowing deeply. He leaves even as he gazes worriedly at Lady Bertia.

“Very well, shall we have tea then? It has already been prepared for us, so please, come over here.”

“Alright, thank you very much your Highness!”

After watching the marquis leave, I smile brightly and go to Lady Bertia’s side. When I offer her my hand in order to escort her, she puts her hand in mine with a beaming smile.

She *is* properly acting out the part of a gentlewoman, but it does seem like she’s much

too cheerful.

Speaking of which, if I recall correctly, she mentioned that she was aiming to become a 'flower of evil'?

While it's true that she's become thinner and her facial structure is more beautiful than before... by all appearances, her personality and facial expressions are clearly heading down the wrong path for her to achieve her goal – is she okay with that?

"Please, sit down here."

Zeno sits Lady Bertia down on a chair he pulls out. I sit down as well across from her.

As we sit ourselves down, the maids prepare our tea.

Lady Bertia gazes with sparkling eyes at the tea and sweets placed in front of us. She's like a dog who's been ordered to 'wait' – it's like she's waiting for me to allow her to eat.

Oh, one of her maids coughed.

"Diet..." she mutters to herself at the sound.

She looks like a dog whose ears are drooped in depression. I can't help but smile wryly at the sight.

"I've never been the best with sweet foods... this cake here is low-sugar?" I say, ordering a nearby maid to bring her a low-sugar, low-calorie cake.

"Low-sugar! *Cake!*"

On seeing the cake the maid puts in front of her, her drooped ears perk up sharply and her tail begins to wag furiously... or at least, that's what I hallucinated.

Lady Bertia, I understand that you're very happy to eat cake, but please don't revert back to a toddler state in your joy, alright?

You're still a child right now so it'll be overlooked as 'cute', but it would not be acceptable as Queen. Everyone around you would comment on it.

Though well, if it were just around me, I wouldn't really care since I would find it interesting.

"Please, help yourself," I say encouragingly.

At those words, she cheerfully rips through the cake, cramming it in her mouth.

She makes it look like the cake is so delicious that I begin to wonder if today's cake is just that amazing. So I eat a bite of my own cake, but as expected, it's no different than usual.

"Right then."

After drinking a sip of tea to push that sweet taste to the back of my throat, I decide to ask her the one thing I want to know the most right now.

"By the way, Lady Bertia, you're wearing something quite unusual around your neck today."

It's a scarf made from silky black fox fur.

I do think it's odd to wear a scarf indoors as well, but there's something that bothers me more than that.

If my eyes aren't tricking me, that scarf isn't made from just fox *fur*, but the entire fox itself.

...a live fox to boot.

"Your Highness, you have sharp eyes! Isn't the fur just so lovely?"

Looking up from her cake, she smiles in satisfaction.

Well, it's true that the fur pelt is lovely. But I don't think that's the problem here.

Glancing behind me, I can see Zeno trying his best to retain his normal, mild smile, but unfortunately the corner of his mouth is twitching.

"It's true that the fur is quite lovely. However, I do believe that this fur has been slightly moving for a while now?"

“Oh, you noticed? That’s odd, Father hasn’t noticed at all.”

There should be no way that a scarf like that could stay on her shoulders, but it’s somehow wrapped around her as if it’s floating, pretending to be a fur pelt.

She cocks her head to the side, apparently unaware of this oddity.

Most of her maids are tilting their heads to the side as well, but the one maid by her side - who seems to be the head maid - quickly averts her gaze.

“Well, this seems interesting so I’ll leave things at that for now. But at my birthday party, there will be people who will care about a fox scarf, so please don’t wear it there, alright? Also, I’ll go and get permission from my father, so from now on, bring it here as a ‘fox’ and not a ‘scarf’.”

“That’s true, wearing a scarf at an indoors party would be strange. I understand! I will do my best. And I honestly appreciate being able to bring Kuro as a fox... as a pet. She hasn’t left my side since I took her in. I really wasn’t able to leave her home today, so I had her disguise herself as a scarf and brought her along.”

...Its disguise isn’t working, you know?

And wait a second, you took in a fox?

“Where did you find it? Does Marquis Noches know about this? Did he say anything about this?”

“She was in a forest near our mansion in our territory, by a strangely-shaped rock. I always passed by there every day when I was out running – I mean out for a walk, and she was always sitting there watching me. The rock looked like a *Torii* gate, so she seemed like Lord Inari to me. So, using all of my memories from my past life, I tried making her *inari* sushi as an offering. She apparently liked it so she went and followed me.”

*Torii* gate?

Lord Inari?

*Inari* sushi?

...As I expected, I can't understand what she's saying today again.

But well, the gist is that when she was out for a walk – or rather running – she found this Lord Fox and it took a shine to her after she gave it something I guess?

“At first I thought I would skin her for her fur or something like a villainess noble girl would, but she's really cute and kind. When I tripped on my way home, she licked at my wound. And I ended up giving her a name, so I started getting attached... I did want a fur scarf, but well, wrapping her around me like this is warmer, so I thought that this was fine too. So I showed her to Father and said that I wanted to keep her as a pet, but he went pasty white and told me to go put her back where I found her. But when I told him about how Kuro licked at my wounds and how I started to get attached after giving her a name, he let me keep him. Since then, he's been pretty naggy about 'treating it well'...does Father think that I would ignore my pet?”

So you let it lick your wound (i.e. blood) and you gave it a name.

Yeah, I'm betting that your father couldn't do anything but say “Treat it well.”

Well, this seems interesting so I think I won't reveal his motives until later.

I'm sure that she'll do more interesting things if she doesn't know everything.

“I see. That's good. I think that you should treat that fox well as well... for the sake of the future.”

“Yes! I'll treat her well!”

At her carefree, cheerful smile, I smile suggestively.

“Please treat *her* well as well,” Zeno murmurs behind me, but I'll ignore him.

“Right then, now that conversation is over with, shall we talk about tomorrow?”

“Leave it to me! I'll be an elegant partner for you, your Highness, just like a villainess would!”

...Her words should be reassuring, but they make me worry. I wonder why.

For now, let's give her a proper warning.

“That’s reassuring... however, I think that you should keep that ‘villainess’ thing a secret – not just tomorrow, but in general. Your memories from a ‘past life’ as well, of course. In high society, you never know what might be a fatal mistake, after all. And we’re entering into high society. If you want to become a top-class flower of evil, you should hide anything that makes you different from others. A flower of evil that has many weaknesses seems more like an underling, wouldn’t you say?”

“I – I see! You have a point! Top-class flowers of evil smile suggestively as they bring their opponents to ruin without showing a single weakness themselves. A flower of evil that says too much and digs their own grave is nothing but third-rate... I understand! I am going to become a beautiful, elegant flower of evil after all, unlike the original Bertia. I won’t say anything unnecessary in front of others – I’ll just smile suggestively!”

“...Thank you. I’m glad that you understand.”

I feel like she may have misunderstood what I meant... but well, I can just back her up if it looks like something’s going to happen. I guess I’ll just watch her for a while?

“By the way, has Marquis Noches already told you the general schedule for tomorrow?”

“Yes, he has. It is sufficient for me to arrive with you and to have your first dance after greeting his Majesty the King and you, correct?”

“Yes, that’s more or less right. We haven’t made our official social debut yet, so I believe so long as we manage that much, we’ll be fine. Oh, but if you run into any trouble or get lost or anything, make sure you ask me, alright? Don’t decide things on your own, okay?”

“Your Highness, you’ll back me up?”

“Yes. You are my fiancée, after all. I’ll do anything within my power to do.”

“Fiancée... that sounds nice. Oh, but you do understand that I will successfully fulfil my role?! I will be properly put in my place - by you!”

“Hm? I think your role as fiancée will be pretty tough, but do your best. I’ll do my best as well.”

“Yes, I’ll do my best!”



She had seemed depressed for a moment, but immediately after she gripped her fists tight, looking determined.

...I really think that something's weird here.

"I'm happy that I'll be able to celebrate my eleventh birthday with you."

But that weirdness is interesting, so I don't correct her. Instead, I decide to just smile brightly.

"I'm happy that I'm able to celebrate your eleventh birthday with you too, your Highness... eleventh? Your Highness, you're turning eleven?"

"Hm? That's right. You didn't know?"

"No, I knew. It's just... your Highness, you will be eleven starting from tomorrow. I became nine on my last birthday. So that means that I'll be ten on my next birthday..."

She apparently already knew that I was turning eleven, but it looks like she recalled something else on hearing that.

Her face gradually pales as she mutters to herself.

At the same time, tears well up in her amber eyes...

"Y – your Highness, Mother is going to-o-o...!"

The tears welling in her eyes overflow and she begins to cry.

Huh? What's the matter? Is this my fault?

But she's talking about her mother.

What is this about? I don't understand.

At her sudden outburst of tears, her maids begin panicking and try to wipe her tears with their handkerchiefs... but her tears are coming down so fast that they stiffen and leave their handkerchiefs on the table, stepping back.

...Could you refrain from looking at me like you're leaving it to me to deal with?

I'm still a ten-year-old child, eleven tomorrow... I'm not almighty, you know?

And isn't she *your* master?

It should be part of your job to deal with her... alright, I get it. Don't look at me so imploringly. I'll do what I can.

"What's the matter, Lady Bertia? Could you explain it to me in a way I can understand? If it's something I can help you with, I will."

"Y – your Highne-e-ess..."

She starts crying even more at my words, but she begins to explain in between her sobs.

After doing my best to listen to her story, as hard to hear as it was... even I was shocked at the unbelievable story.

According to her, in the 'game' or something where we appear, her mother dies right before her tenth birthday.

And frighteningly, she dies due to an infectious disease making its rounds around the capital three months prior.

This infectious disease is a new strain... to be precise, it's apparently an evolved form of a known infectious disease. It supposedly takes a month to discover medicine that could treat it.

However, the herb needed for this medicine is not only difficult to grow, but as it isn't normally used as an herb, it isn't grown. So it's difficult to obtain.

To make things worse, this herb is normally harvested in a completely different season. It doesn't grow naturally, so there's only a very few on the market, the ones that were in storage.

Even importing the herb from other countries takes time, so in the end, almost everyone who contracted the disease apparently died.

"After Mother contracted the disease, Father desperately looked for the medicine. But he wasn't able to obtain it... however, the royal family had a bit of this Ruona grass

leftover even after putting aside enough for the royal family. Father begs his Majesty for the grass, knowing he's asking for the impossible... but his Majesty refuses, and Mother dies. In order to be fair and just, his Majesty couldn't give the grass to just a single one of his subjects, and as your younger brother had contracted the disease as well, he couldn't give up the grass just in case it was necessary."

Though her tears haven't stopped, her sobs have died down. She looks down with a pained expression.

"After that, Father becomes a completely different person. I think that even if he logically understood that there was nothing to be done, there was a part of him that couldn't accept that. He's swallowed by the darkness in his heart... and slowly heads down a path of evil."

Watching her, I think:

...If this isn't going to happen for a year, couldn't we just gather that herb now?

If it can't be found out-of-season, even if it's difficult to grow, if we prepare it now we'll be able to harvest a fair amount.

If we move now, we'll be able to save not only her mother, but the lives of many citizens.

Well, that's if her story is true... if.

"Hey, Lady Bertia. Your stories are about the future, not the present, correct? In that case, if we prepare the medicine now, won't your mother be fine?"

"Y – your Highness, but if we do that, the plot..."

"What's more important? Your mother, or this 'plot'?"

"Mother of course! But... but..."

She says things I don't really understand like "But the compelling force," and "But if the plot gets all weird..." but I console her.

"If something goes wrong, we can think together about what we should do," I say persuasively.

She looked uncertain, but perhaps because she realized that nothing will change if she just cries, she nods firmly, wipes her tears, and begins eating her cake.

As I verified the exact details for tomorrow until her tears dried, Marquis Noches came to pick her up.

He seems a little out of breath, so he probably came back at top speed.

Just how little trust does he have in her?

“Your Highness. I am very sorry. Even if I’m willing to accept ruin, I will not let my mother die. So I will try doing something. I apologize if the plot changes. I will try to get it back on track if it does, so please forgive me.”

...Why is she so dedicated to this ‘plot’?

You realize that Marquis Noches has stiffened at the sudden sound of an ominous word like ‘ruin’?

“Don’t worry. I’ll help you too.”

After I smile reassuringly at her, she smiles a little and lowers her head.

“I’m counting on you,” she says before leaving.

“You don’t mean that you’re going to help her go to ruin right? Right?” Marquis Noches asks repeatedly, but I just silently smile sweetly at him.

I watch Marquis Noches, who’s looking strained, run after Lady Bertia.

And then...

“Well then, should I go visit my father too?”

“Visit your Majesty the King?” Zeno asks, standing beside me.

“That’s right. Tomorrow is my birthday, after all. I’m thinking I might ask my father for permission to use the greenhouse and for some Ruona grass seedlings. He’s always worried about how he doesn’t know what to get me since I never ask for anything, after all.”

“Would he have not already prepared a present for you?”

“He’s apparently narrowed it down to a few possibilities, but he hasn’t decided on the one yet. Apparently he’s troubled because he wants it to be a surprise this year, so he can’t ask me.”

“It’s supposed to be a surprise but you already know that much?”

“Hm? I’m not sure what you mean. Did you say something just now?”

“No, not a thing.”

When I look up with a smile, I see Zeno looking frustrated – *I hate this villainous prince*, he’s probably thinking.

I don’t know whether the future she speaks of is true or not, but it seems fun to go along with her story and to try to grow herbs that are apparently difficult to grow.

And also, if the future she speaks of truly comes to pass, as we already know where and when the disease makes its first appearance, we can prepare the medicine now and stop the disease from spreading.

If we do that, we can save many lives.

It’s obviously better to be completely prepared now rather than to do nothing and regret it later just because the information is a bit vague.

And even if that future never comes to pass... well, I can just think of it as having fun instead of getting a birthday present.

“We’re leaving, Zeno,” I say, heading to my father’s location in high spirits.

If I tell my father that I want it because I’ve become interested in the study of medicinal herbs, I’m sure he’ll prepare it for me without suspecting a thing.

It’s kind of fun having lots to do.

This is all surely thanks to Lady Bertia. I need to thank her.

# Chapter 3

## Bertia (10 years old)

“Welcome. Thank you very much for coming to visit... It has been a while, Prince Cecil.”

“Thank you for inviting me. Yes, it’s been a while, Lady Bertia.”

It’s Lady Bertia’s tenth birthday.

During the past three months, I was unusually busy with a lot of different things and was unable to meet her. On finally meeting her, I notice that she seems a little... worn-out.

“What’s the matter? Are you feeling ill?”

Preparations for her party are underway at this very moment, although only a small handful of family friends will attend it. Right after this, she’ll be the star of the party.

As I volunteered to be her escort as her fiancé, I came to the Noches mansion a little early. But by the time I arrived, she had already gotten ready for the party.

She was wearing a faded gold-coloured or perhaps milk tea-coloured dress that closely resembled my hair colour. It looked a bit mature on a ten-year-old girl. In direct contrast to her charming clothing, her expression was clouded – she seemed somehow tired.

Despite this, fire blazes in her eyes as she glares at me resentfully.

“Your Highness, you’re terrible!” she bursts out resentfully - immediately after we sat across each other in the drawing room and greeted each other.

“What?”

I am technically the crown prince, so normally, if someone said something like that to me, all the adults around me would go pasty white... but the only people in this room other than us, Zeno and Lady Bertia’s two maids, have already gotten used to this. They



nonchalantly prepare our tea for us.

Naturally, the black fox curled up on her lap continues to sway its tail at an even tempo.

“Lady Bertia, did I do something to make you twist your lovely face so?” I ask, cocking my head to the side.

“Argh! Argh! Argh!” she shouts suddenly. She picks up a cushion next to her with both hands and begins slamming it against the sofa.

It’s a simple way to let out your temper in a way that doesn’t harm others. It’s additionally an incredibly easy way to demonstrate your anger.

...Though the black fox-lookalike on her lap doesn’t seem too happy about this turn of events.

“...Ahem. Excuse me.”

I drink some black tea that her maids prepared, waiting for her to calm down. But she calms down in just around thirty seconds. She returns the cushion to its original position, looking awkward, and turns back to face me. She coughs.

“B – but, your Highness, you’re in the wrong as well. Just like we promised, I haven’t talked about ‘the past’ with anyone but you. So – so – the only person I can talk to about my mother’s situation is you, your Highness, but I haven’t been able to see you for three months! It’s my birthday today! Originally, my mother would have passed away by now! I wrote you so many letters while we couldn’t meet, but all you would say was ‘It’ll be fine,’ – I didn’t know what I should do...”

...Her maids and Zeno are listening in as hard as they can, but apparently they don’t count as ‘people listening to the conversation’ in her mind.

Well, a maid good enough to be employed in the House of Noches probably wouldn’t reveal her master’s murmurs and secrets to others, and my ‘envoy’ has reported that in fact no one has revealed such things, so it’ll probably be fine.

As I muse about such things while listening to her grouching, she finally begins to cry, large tears dripping from her eyes.

Even I panicked a little at the sight.

After placing my tea on the desk carefully in order to not make a sound, I make my way to her side fairly quickly and softly put my hand on her back.

I do feel like we're a bit too close for an unmarried man and woman, but she *is* my fiancée – it's probably fine.

More importantly, I need to comfort her.

"Lady Bertia, I'm sorry. I hadn't thought that you would worry so much about this. I'm really fine – that's why I wrote that I was in my letters. I just was a bit busy dealing with cleaning up some accidents and planning out how to best use some leftovers and covering things up and so on. And making your birthday present took me some time too..."

To be honest, the letters she sent me didn't contain any information I hadn't already processed, so I didn't really have anything to say but 'It'll be fine,'...but from her reaction, I've caused her to worry quite a bit thanks to my short responses.

It's not the first time that I've caused people to worry like this because I just say that I'm fine if I think the future seems okay. I forget that people may not see the same future as I do.

I think it's pretty easy to see the future if you make some logical deductions based on various bits of information... but it seems that depending on the person, it may not be that easy.

When I dismiss something as something I already know and sum it up in a few simple words, it looks like sometimes I still need to say more.

This seems like a bad habit of mine.

I need to be careful.

"What do you mean, 'fine'!? Since we're changing the plot anyways, I tried to obtain as much Ruona grass as possible in order to save as many people as possible, but I don't have anywhere near enough!... And it was difficult for me to cultivate or preserve a lot of them that well so there's a lot that can't even be used for medicinal purposes. And also, the disease outbreak that should've been happening isn't, and my mother, who should've died by my birthday, is doing just fine. I just don't know what's going on... I don't know what I should do!"

“Ah, hey, Lady Bertia. Don’t cry so much. It’s fine.”

“It is not fine!”

“It’s fine. The disease outbreak happened, just like you said... it’s just that since you gave me information, I was able to deduce what kind of disease it was and what kind of medicine to make as well as where it would begin spreading. So it’s just that I made the medicine before the outbreak happened, and when it did, I quarantined the patients at the source for treatment, so there were almost no deaths or casualties.”

“There’s no way that making the medicine and quarantining the patients at the source for treatment would be fine... huh? Medicine? Quarantines at the source? Treatment?”

“That’s right. So the disease has already been put under control – it’s unlikely it will infect your mother. Oh, but just in case, here’s the medicine. I thought it would be a good idea to bring it to be prepared for a worst-case scenario.”

I take the medicine from Zeno, who had been waiting next to me for the right moment to give me the medicine. I place it in her hand and have her grip it.

“Medicine? What? Huh? What? Wait, I don’t understand...”

“See, that’s why I said it would be fine. This way, there won’t be many deaths due to an outbreak in the capital, nor will your mother die.”

“Huh? Wha-a-a-a-at!?” cries Lady Bertia, opening her tear-filled eyes wide.

Oh, one of the maids quietly headed out to the hallway to deal with the people who would no doubt come at the sound of Lady Bertia’s scream.

Yes, truly an excellent maid.

“W – wait a second, your Highness! What does this mean!? Please explain!”

Looking surprised or perhaps panicked, she grabs my shoulders and shakes me back and forth violently.

...I’ve never been treated like this before.

But my head is spinning – this isn’t a very nice experience.

“I understand already, so shall we calm down for now?”

With a bright smile, I grip both her wrists and stop her from shaking me.

“As if I could calm down! Hurry up and explain!”

She looks like she’s about to bite me. Good grief, I think.

I tell her about what happened after she told me about her mother’s future death.



After her story, I asked my father in order to receive permission to use the greenhouse and Ruona grass seedlings.

As it was apparently difficult to cultivate, I read books that described how to cultivate it. I additionally used some of my own ideas based on Ruona grass’ peculiarities as a plant... and it grew unbelievably well.

Since I had grown it so very easily, I thought that I might try my hand at making the medicine as well. I asked my father to hire doctors of pharmacy and medicine in order to learn from them. As I learned under them, I read every book I could get my hands on in the royal library.

I had Lady Bertia tell me everything she could recall about her mother’s symptoms when she died as well as any peculiarities of the disease in order to narrow down my deductions as much as possible.

...Though she had apparently been simply asking me for advice over tea and hadn’t really thought that I would begin to seriously make my move.

After thinking hard about those symptoms along with the most statistically likely infectious diseases to occur based on the weather and climate this year, I eventually narrowed it down to a single disease.

And from her comment that the disease was an evolved form of a known disease and the fact that Ruona grass was needed for the medicine, I tried making the medicine through trial and error.

It’s much simpler to reverse-engineer a known solution than to determine a single

answer from a large number of possibilities. So I reached the solution remarkably easily.

Though well, I couldn't verify whether my solution was truly correct or not until the outbreak already happened.

Anyways, the point is that it took quite a bit of time for a simple prince like me who was no scientist to get this far, but things went pretty well up until then.

...That's right, until then.

Though I had more-or-less determined the disease and how to make its medicine, it was a deduction that all hinged on believing Lady Bertia's story.

I had made my move out of curiosity, thinking that I didn't really care whether or not it was true. But the adults around me wouldn't do anything for a reason like that.

I didn't have the necessary tools to convince them and nor did I have the guts.

And so out of desperation, I decided to create some coincidences.

I, a prince, claimed to *coincidentally* be interested in infectious diseases and visited a doctor researching them under the pretense of learning from him.

There, I talked passionately about the potential effects of Ruona grass and their use, which I had *coincidentally* gotten into growing.

The doctor listened intently to my story perhaps partly because I was the crown prince.

At time to time, we entered into back-and-forth discussions to exchange ideas.

However, it was difficult moving forwards from there.

It was much more difficult than I had imagined to lead him on a round-about way towards the answer without revealing that I already knew it.

I experienced how painfully difficult it was to manipulate someone to where you wanted them without them noticing.

I lost count of how many times I wondered how he couldn't notice something this simple.

Regardless, I doggedly continued our discussions until I somehow managed to give the doctor all the information necessary to make the medicine. All I needed to do was make sure that he would make the connection between the medicine and the disease when the time came.

All I needed was for the doctor to notice the disease as early as possible once he had finished all the initial preparations.

After all, the infectious disease that was most likely to spread this time around was his speciality.

I presumed that in front of a patient, even if their symptoms were slightly different, he would identify the correct disease. The disease was most likely to enter the capital through the main gates – which could also be called the entranceway to the city. And so since there *coincidentally* happened to be an empty room near the gates, I asked my father to make his temporary home in the capital be there.

And so I had everything prepared by the time Lady Bertia had said the incident would occur. I had successfully reached a situation where all I had to do was watch my plan unfold.

Well, it might be a bit odd to say this after I did all that, but to be honest, at that point I didn't even half-believe Lady Bertia's stories of the future.

It's just that I had thought that even if the chance that an infectious disease rampages through the capital was slim, it would be a good idea to be prepared. I had been able to learn a lot through this incident as well so a part of me was satisfied with just that.

That's why I was shocked when I visited his home to see someone suffering from what looked like the initial symptoms of the disease. I had snuck into his home on the pretext of wanting to see his medical texts, wielding my childish innocence as a weapon.

Stuff like this really happens, I thought.

But though I did think that, since I had already made all the preparations, I didn't really panic.



All I had to do was *coincidentally* connect the dots and manipulate events to make a ‘miracle’ happen.

The doctor really worked hard once he realized that a patient with a new strain of infectious disease had appeared.

Naturally, I provided him with my large supply of Ruona grass which I had been *coincidentally* growing as a hobby.

In this way, everything unfolded just like I had planned.

This happened just around two or three months back.



“Wa – wa – wait a second, please! Your story is weird in a lot of places!”

“Is that so? In which places?”

After telling Lady Bertia about everything that happened after she told me about the infectious disease – about how I discovered a patient, about how I had the doctor realize how to make the effective medicine and had him actually make it, about how I quarantined the disease before it could really spread and treated it – she cried out while holding her head in her hands.

She’s saying that my story is weird, but things unfolded just the way I planned – I don’t think it’s really that weird?

Oh, by the way, I obviously didn’t mention that I hadn’t really believed her until the first victim appeared.

Putting aside my personal beliefs, in the end, I started to move based on her story and succeeded in protecting the citizens of this kingdom from the terrifying disease that she had predicted.

There’s no reason for me to go out of my way to be stupidly honest and reveal everything. That would just make her think less of me.

“W – w – why would you do such a thing, your Highness!?”

“Did I not say that I would help you?”

“You did say that. However...”

“Additionally, I have no intentions to ignore my own fiancée’s worries, nor to overlook the possibility that the woman who will become my second mother could die, no matter how slim that possibility may be... especially if I can deal with the issue if I put a little effort into it.”

“That definitely was not a ‘little’ effort. Normally, an eleven-year-old child wouldn’t be able to do something like that.”

Lady Bertia looks at me with a complicated expression, like she can’t tell whether she should be happy.

“Hm? I’m almost twelve, you know?”

“A twelve-year-old too!”

“Well, a normal twelve-year-old probably couldn’t. However, remember, I’m the crown prince. I’ve received quite a bit of education and I can use the books in the royal library as I please to a certain degree. For the first time in a while, I spent entire days engrossed in my books, but that was beneficial to me and fun as well. Oh, and I can also borrow other people’s help if I get Father’s permission, though it’s not like I can use people as I please.”

Though well, since there were a few too many ‘coincidences’ this time around, Father is probably a little suspicious since he knows the whole situation. But if I just insist that it’s “just a coincidence” with a smile, he’ll probably let it go, look tired, and mutter “good grief”.

“I – is that so?” says Lady Bertia, looking at me with an astonished expression.

I respond with a bright smile.

Behind me, I feel like I can hear Zeno murmuring, cheerful as usual, that even a normal young crown prince wouldn’t be able to do something like this. But I decide to ignore him.

“It’s possible, perhaps? It’s possible for things to work out so nicely, perhaps? It

shouldn't be, right!? It shouldn't be, but it is!? Wait, but for the 'Android Prince' who's the embodiment of a genius, maybe it is possible? But but..." murmurs Lady Bertia in front of me, hand on her chin as she begins to worry.

...What does she mean by 'Android Prince'?

As I expected, I can't understand what she's saying again today.

"Well, don't sweat over the small details, okay? It seems like the Lord and Lady Noches are fine as well and the damage to the capital was minimized. Isn't that good?"

"...T – that's true! It's good that Mother and everyone in the capital were able to escape from the disease's evil grasp!"

Lady Bertia decides to stop thinking. Perhaps she thought too much and reached her limit.

Yeah, this is more convenient for me too.

After all, even if someone asks me why I was able to do something like that, the only answer I can give is that I was able to do it when I tried.

"Oh, that's right, Lady Bertia - I'm planning to give you your official birthday present from the King and the crown prince later, but unrelated to that, I have something for you from me personally..."

Though she decided to let things go, it seems like some things are still bothering her. I hold out a velvet-covered square box to her.

It was about the size of both my hands put together. Naturally it didn't fit in my pocket, so I had Zeno hand it to me right before I gave it to her.

"W – what is this?"

Despite deciding to let things go, it looks like she's having a tough time doing just that. She looks at the box I hold out to her cautiously, with an expression like she has something stuck in her teeth.

Her expression makes her look like she's about to burst out saying "You still have more surprises for me!?"

“It’s my personal birthday gift to you. Though it’s handmade, so it’s nothing special,” I say, opening the lid of the box and showing her the inside.

“My! It – it’s splendid!”

It’s an exquisitely designed necklace that looks like silver ivy is tangled together in the form of a necklace. It’s adorned with an ultramarine blue heart-shaped stone, the colour of the night sky on a clear day.

Though well, in reality it isn’t a ‘stone’, but rather a carefully cut glass bottle containing an ultramarine blue liquid.

“This is some of the leftovers from the cure for that disease.”

“What? Leftovers... of the cure?”

Confused, Lady Bertia tilts her head nearly horizontally to the side.

“That’s right. While I was researching Ruona grass in order to make the cure, I learned that it has the ability to increase the effectiveness of other medicine. However, if you just use it as it is then it’s not really well-suited with some medicines, so the ones it can improve are limited. Apparently the base medicine for the medicine we used this time around was well-suited with Ruona grass, so the medicine turned out good.”

As I explain, she listens while nodding her head in agreement.

However, it’s a mystery to me whether she’s nodding her head because she really understands.

“But while I was looking through the royal library’s books to see if I could use Ruona grass for other things since I had the chance, I found a book that was a little interesting. Using that book’s unique refinement technique, I was able to extract just the medicinal components of the grass. In this form, I could make special medicine that could increase the effectiveness of many different types of medicine. So with this special medicine, I tried making a universal poison antidote.”

Though well, I say it’s an interesting book but I found it in a hidden room where all the sort of forbidden books were.

A certain location in the royal library had bothered me due to the way the royal library

was structured. When I investigated it just in case, I found the hidden room.

It was locked with an odd mechanism that required me to move around numbers on a clock face. It really felt like it was a room I shouldn't open, so naturally I ended up opening it.

Humans are creatures that naturally want to do things that are forbidden to them, wouldn't you say? Especially 'children' like me, no?

On a side note, the passcode to open the door was my mother's birthday.

I'm sure that Father set it to that so he wouldn't forget his beloved wife's birthday, but the entire country extravagantly celebrates the Queen's birthday. Am I the only one who thinks that it's pretty risky to set the passcode to a number the entire country knows?

"...Huh? What? Universal antidote?"

"That's right. Here in what looks like an ultramarine blue stone. This is a glass bottle that holds the antidote. I extracted the detoxifying components of several herbs that work well as antidotes along with refined extract of Ruona grass to increase its effect. It's guaranteed to work."

In order to build up an immunity to poison, at times I drink a non-lethal amount of poison. When it came time for me to drink poison, I drank a little more than usual and secretly also drank my antidote. It worked, so the antidote definitely works.

Naturally, if I told others about this they'd definitely get angry at me, so it's a secret that I experimented like this.

"As my future wife, there's always the danger that you'll be targeted by many different people. To make sure that I don't lose you in even a worst-case scenario, I made you this to be your protective charm. You'll accept it, right?"

I smile at her brightly even as she frets. I take the necklace from the box and softly place it on her thin neck.

Her cheeks flare with red in an instant, almost as if someone had cast a spell on her.

"Mm, it suits you."

“T – thank you v – very much.”

Even as she looks to the ground, cheeks red as an apple, she strokes the necklace on her neck. Seeing her like this makes me feel satisfied.

The medicine that was leftover after the disease incident was dealt with had become quite the pain.

Thinking that it would good if something useful was created, I threw myself into my work out of curiosity. But it was even more fun than I had expected and I went too far.

Ruona grass extract no longer had the limitation of only being useable with medicine it was ‘well-suited’ with. However, this had its pros and cons.

On the positive side, medicine mixed with Ruona grass extract obviously became more effective.

On the flip side... mixing it with poison or narcotics and such made their effects that much worse, creating ultimate poisons.

It’s a huge help if used for good things but devastating if used for bad things.

Considering the risks vs. the benefits, I decided against revealing this medicine to the public.

And so, instead of revealing the medicine to the public, I made it one of the royal family’s secret medicines. I then decided to begin with giving it as a birthday present to Lady Bertia, who would likely inevitably be in danger due to her place by my side.

So it could be used a shield against those who would destroy my precious fiancée (*toy*).

“Lady Bertia, this necklace’s secret is a secret between us two, okay?”

It would be a pain if the existence of this medicine became well-known... my father might end up discovering that I entered the hidden room,

And also, in a worst case scenario, if people who knew about the medicine stole it away from her, then it would be useless as a shield.

From the way she usually acts, I don’t know just how much the people around her will



believe her, but I'll keep her quiet just in case.

"I – I promise for you for sure definitely!"

Hm? Lady Bertia, that sentence ended weirdly, you know?

I immediately felt ill at ease at how effectively I had muzzled her.

As I wonder what happened, for a good while, Lady Bertia grips the necklace I had given her with both hands and trembles, looking down with a bright-red face.

But immediately afterwards...

"Prince Cecil!" she calls out suddenly, looking at me with very determined eyes, "In order to repay you for this debt, I will properly fix the plotline and become a splendid villainess noble lady! I, Bertia Ibil Noches, swear this on this necklace!"

"...What?"

"In order to do this, I will begin with my father, who was meant to begin his path to evil due to this incident! I will make him magnificently evil!"

"No, I really don't need you to do that?"

Marquis Noches is pretty good at his job, so it's probably better for him to serve the kingdom instead of committing crimes.

"Please, there's no need for you to hold back! This is how you and the heroine will become happy! I will dedicate my heart and soul to becoming a villainess!"

"No, I'm not holding myself back?"

"Just watch me! I will superbly walk along the path to ruin!"

"..."

Mm, it doesn't seem like she's listening to me.

This is a problem.

But well, Marquis Noches isn't likely to dance to her tune so easily, so it's probably okay if I leave things the way they are.

...It seems interesting, after all.

If it looks like things are getting bad, I can step in and stop her, right?

As she looks at me with sparkling eyes, making some kind of incomprehensible vow, I decide to ignore her with a silent smile.



# Chapter 4

## Bertia (11 years old)

“Your Highness, the day has finally come!”

Lady Bertia holds her hands closed in front of her chest. She wears a beautiful pure white dress and has decorated her crimson hair with pale yellow roses.

The necklace adorned with a fake blue jewel that I gifted to her rests shines on her chest along with an exquisite chain scattered with jewels that makes the necklace all the more vibrant.

We are currently alone in this waiting room.

Well, to be precise, two of her maids and Zeno are standing in a corner, but they’re doing their best to remain unseen, so it’s probably alright to say that we’re alone.

“That dress suits you well. Very beautiful, Lady Bertia.”

“Thank you very much. Your pure white knight uniform suits you well too, your Highness! So that’s formal attire!... I feel like I pale in comparison.”

After I praise her clothing, she gives me a rather strained smile despite her apparent happiness. For some reason, she became a little downhearted after comparing herself to me.

Even though she looks cute and well-dressed even if she doesn’t force a smile.

Speaking of which, when did I begin to be able to sincerely say that she looks ‘beautiful’ and ‘cute’ with no hesitation?

At the very least, I think that when we first met, I mainly only called her ‘cute’ out of obligation.

When we met again a year later, she had indeed changed enough to make me double-take, but I didn’t consider her as pretty as I do now.

Part of the reason is probably because her face is getting less round as she grows older... but I know that her flawless porcelain-white skin, her glossy and shiny crimson hair, and her thin body that's showing signs of maturity are all thanks to her hard work.

"...You've become beautiful," I murmur unconsciously, rephrasing my words a little from before.

Today, gazing at her again, I vaguely think that she really has changed a lot.

"W – what!? Ah I see – your Highness, do you need something from me!? But I can't do anything for you right now! After this, I am going to make my memorable social debut at a party and carry out my 'Plan to Corrupt Father – Take 2', after all! Even if you're the one asking, I can't spare any energy for you at this crucial event!"

...Correction. Perhaps the sorry state of her inside self has not changed much.

Just as she says, today is the yearly party hosted by the royal family to celebrate young nobles who are making their social debut.

By attending this party, we finally can become a part of high society.

Social debuts typically happen from ages thirteen to twenty.

The reason why there's such a large age range is that different families may take more time than others preparing, and there may be some issues related to the young noble in question's schooling – enrolment times or studying abroad, for example.

Some among low-ranking nobility find it difficult to afford the necessary attire, so naturally their social debuts end up later due to the time needed to raise the money. And young nobles who study abroad either have their debuts before or after they leave, so they end up earlier or later.

In my case, as I'm royalty, fairly talented, and set to start middle school at Halm Academy starting from next year, it was desired that I make my debut the first spring after my thirteenth birthday.

That in itself was perfectly fine – you could even say that it was a natural turn of events.

However, the issue with this was Lady Bertia.

She is two years younger than me – still eleven.

As she is my fiancée, it has obviously become more common for her to be my partner at parties I attend. However, it's too early for her social debut.

However, if I end up making my social debut, I will inevitably take part in parties and governmental affairs. I absolutely need a partner.

And so, I have only two options – have her make her debut with me, early as it is, so she can accompany me... or have a different woman accompany me.

This may not have been a problem if I had an older sister, but there are no single woman who have made their social debut in my family.

There are technically some if I go looking at my distant relatives... but since it's possible for me to marry relatives who are not closely related, I would likely end up in a troublesome situation.

It would be even worse if I was accompanied by some Marquis' daughter who I wasn't even related to.

...It's a pain just thinking about the kind of trouble that would bring.

If I were single, I could've easily gone through numerous partners to choose the one who would be my wife, but I have Lady Bertia. I can't do something like that, nor do I want to.

In this case, I can only either ask Lady Bertia to make her social debut a little early and back her up if anything happens, or wait for her to turn thirteen to make my debut – to hold things off until I turned fifteen.

To be honest, I planned to choose the latter.

Debuting at fifteen isn't particularly late – there aren't any big problems with it.

It's just that I would be restricted from participating in some governmental affairs until I was fifteen. It's just that they want me to help them as soon as possible since I'm 'talented', but it's not like governmental affairs will be put on hold just because I delay my debut.

I had ignored pleas saying ‘It would be nice if you debuted early...’ and thought to wait for her to be sure she wanted to make her debut before debuting with her.

The reason why I changed my mind is because Lady Bertia herself asked otherwise.

If she made her debut at eleven, I would need to back her up a little as her fiancée if she made mistakes, but the burden on her would be much greater.

As I would be able to do more things, the advantages would greatly outweigh the disadvantages.

If she was fine with it, I had no reason to refuse.

...Even if she were plotting some slightly amusing plans.

“Just watch, your Highness! All my plans to convince Father up until now have failed horribly, but I will make my comeback now!”

She punches her hand into the air enthusiastically. I can’t help but let out a snort.

It makes me recall everything she’s done since she declared that she would turn her father, Marquis Noches, to evil.

I feel a little bad for the marquis, but it was a pretty interesting story.

“Speaking of which, the other day, Marquis Noches let me read that document you made for him – *The Basics of Villainy! From Zero to Villain*. It was pretty well made.”

“What, no way!? Father showed it to you!? When did he...!? How can this be? I’m so embarrassed.”

She jumps in shock at my words then looks down, face flushed red.

She reminded me a lot of Zeno this one time... I once went to his room to kill time and ended up finding an interesting-looking book he had hidden. I didn’t mean anything bad by it. After flipping through it, I carelessly left it on the bed. Afterwards, Zeno came up to me, bright red, and complained heatedly that a maid had seen it when she cleaned his room.

Back then, I was young so I just felt like messing around to help kill time... I mean, I

was just a bit careless, but now thinking back I feel a little bad.

But well, I also think that Zeno's partly to blame for leaving it somewhere I could find it.

Anyone would find a hidden safe embedded in the floor beneath the bed.

And how cliché to put the key in a hollowed-out book in the bookcase.

It's like he was asking for it to be found.

"Lately, Marquis Noches and I have often met for tea as friends. Sometimes, after he visits Father, he visits me as well and talks to me about many things. That's when we sometimes talk about you. So he said that you gave it to him as a present and showed it to me."

It would be more correct to say that I go to him for advice about Lady Bertia, but I'm not lying.

It's just that I'm fudging the small details.



That was yes, a few weeks after Lady Bertia began her crusade to convince Marquis Noches to let himself be turned evil.

Out of nowhere, Marquis Noches sent me an invitation to tea.

As it was an invitation from my future father-in-law, and as I had no particular reason to refuse, I agreed readily.

And so, we had a tea party in an inner courtyard of the castle.

He looked disheartened. After a moment of silence, he opened his mouth to say...

"Prince Cecil, lately I haven't been able to understand my young daughter's feelings."

...in a grave tone.

"What's the matter?" I ask with a smile, acting normal even as I feel Zeno letting out a



small snort behind me.

His story was basically ‘My beloved and stupid daughter, Lady Bertia, has lately for some reason been encouraging her father, me, to do evil deeds.’

I wanted to carelessly say that I already know about this since I’ve already heard about this from the person herself and since I’ve received reports from my ‘envoy’. But instead, I endured it.

“Yes, yes, I see, and so?” I encouraged him to continue.

Because see, given that I was the one to tell Lady Bertia to not talk about her previous life in front of others, I can’t exactly bring it up myself, and since my ‘envoy’ is performing their duties in secret, I can’t go blathering about them to Marquis Noches.

“Prince Cecil, I believe that a member of my family becoming a criminal would bring nothing but shame to the family. However, my daughter does not appear to think the same... she says to not murder, to not commit robberies that may physically injure others, and to not do anything worse than taking over or crushing other families... but she says to embezzle and commit fraud, to tyrannically abuse my authority, and to take initiative to do anything that wouldn’t merit a death sentence. The other day, she finally even began to prepare documents like this... oh, but the contents are rather good even if it’s wrong on a fundamental level. It’s well put together and very easy to understand. There’s even illustrations, but although it’s rather interesting as just something to read...” he says, holding out a book to me.

*The Basics of Villainy! From Zero to Villain*, the title of the book, was neatly written in a feminine hand.

“I may see it?” I confirm before taking it.

Flipping through it, I see front-and-centre the approximate income of your everyday prime minister after they used their monthly income and influence to embezzle money, along with even interviews with actual criminals. Although I have no idea where she obtained this information nor how trustworthy it is.

Additionally, it contained illustrated examples on how to commit a number of crimes, along with their benefits. A slightly strangely drawn girl that closely resembled Lady Bertia explained all this. It was a book with an extremely interesting concept.

“...Marquis Noches, I would like to carefully investigate this book. Would you mind if I borrowed it?”

“...Yes, of course. Please, feel free to keep it.”

I smile brightly. Although he looks rather tired, Marquis Noches still smiles brightly back.

Mm, if this is just a complete fabrication, I can simply enjoy it as interesting reading material. But if it seems like she got the information from actual informants... I'll definitely need to watch the situation and deal with it if necessary.

That's right, I borrowed it because I may need to deal with the situation. It's most definitely not because I wanted to read it because I thought it seemed interesting.

I just want you to understand that.

“But, how to say it... what a waste of talent. With this kind of interesting concept, she could probably make a tourist guide for the capital or something and have it sell.”

“Yes, that is definitely one positive. While it's an unusual drawing style, her drawings are charming and cute – it would surely be popular.”

“Shall I propose this idea to Father and commission her if there's an opportunity?”

“I would be grateful. Lately, if I talk to his Majesty the King about my daughter's positive, he refuses to listen to me, saying that I just think that because I'm such a doting father. Why is his Majesty so blind to her idiotic cuteness?”

“...I see. While I will avoid statements on that subject, if I want to make a proposal to Father, I would need Lady Bertia to make another book. I cannot show him this book, after all.”

“I will try to make my daughter make one when I see my chance. For now, the problem at hand is... the fact that my daughter is passionately trying to make me into a criminal, perhaps? Every day, morning to night, all she talks about is that. Until this situation is dealt with, I do not believe that she will consider anything else.”

“That's... how should I say it... my sympathies.”

Since it's Lady Bertia we're talking about, I expected her to make good on her words. And from my envoy's reports, I had thought that I understood the gist of the situation... but hearing it from the marquis himself makes me feel rather sorry for not stopping her.

As a simple observer, I can't do anything but consider it amusin... I mean, worry for him in a detached manner, but the marquis himself probably can't stand it.

And also I feel like Marquis Noches has actually somewhat aged.

Well then, what should I do?

If I could, I would prefer to let Lady Bertia do as she pleases for a bit longer, since that would be more amusin... I mean, that would allow me to obtain more useful information, but at this rate, Marquis Noches may get depressed and fall ill. That would trouble my father due to the marquis' inability to fulfill his duties towards the administration of the kingdom.

...Oh, that's it. I just need to have Marquis Noches build up a bit of an immunity towards Lady Bertia's rampage.

If he could just simply enjo... calmly deal with Lady Bertia when she runs wild, he would probably deal with it himself somehow – he's very talented, after all.

In that case...

"Marquis Noches, if Lady Bertia does anything particularly bad, I will stop her as her fiancé. I believe that it may be a good idea to not take her words and actions to heart. She's going through puberty right now – she's probably starting to like bad boys, like a lot of other girls her age."

"But in that case, would she not normally want you, your Highness, to become bad, rather than her father?"

"She really loves her father, after all. She probably admires you more than myself. That's why she must want to see her ideal man in you."

"That can't... no, never mind, that could be it."

...I'm rather proud of myself for not inadvertently muttering 'stupidly doting father'.

“Additionally, as you can see, I’m still young. I do not have the right appearance to pull off the bad boy look. She surely thought that your dandiness gave you a charm that best fit that ideal.”

“I see. Your Highness, you sometimes exude an... aura... sometimes, after all. My daughter likely thought that there was no need to encourage you to be evil.”

“...Marquis Noches?”

Didn’t you just casually say something incredibly rude?

And Zeno, I can tell that you’re furiously nodding your head with sparkling eyes even if you’re behind me, you know?

“Oh, I apologize. That was rude of me. I’ve been a bit tired lately, worrying too much about my daughter. I’ve often insulted people lately. In fact, earlier in front of his Majesty, I even murmured ‘Gush about your family somewhere else. You dimwit. Hurry up and finish things up.’ Ha ha ha...”

Looking a little brighter, Marquis Noches lets out a lighthearted laugh... but Marquis Noches – no, father and daughter both – just what do they think of us royalty?

I would like to thoroughly hear just what they think sometime.

“So then, it’s like this? I consider my daughter’s words and actions as a form of love, and if she goes to far, all I can do is punish her – watching over her otherwise?... I see. It makes me feel a little gloomy, but I will bear with it as you’ve promised to deal with it if she does something.”

Marquis Noches had finally brightened up a little, but his expression clouds over again at the thought of the future.

...Is it just my imagination, or is he trying to push dealing with all of Lady Bertia’s troublesome actions over to me?

Could you come asking for advice *after* you’ve done your best as her father?

Despite how I may look... no, just like I look, I’m still a twelve-year-old child, you know? I’m someone who hasn’t even made their social debut yet, you realize?

“If it’s too difficult for you, why don’t you ask your wife for help? She is both your child, after all, so she would gladly help you, no? And as they’re both women, perhaps she may better understand your daughter’s feelings or talk with her more smoothly.”

“That idea has promise. However, I thought it a little disgraceful as a man to complain or whine in front of women or children. I believe my wife may get exasperated with me...”

Like I’ve been saying, you do realize I’m still technically a child that hasn’t even made their social debut?

Are you alright with not only complaining in front of me, but going as far as asking me for help?

...For now, I feel like if I back down now, he’ll make me deal with all the annoying things. Shall I do my best to convince him to get his wife to work hard?

“What are you saying, Marquis Noches? Women spoil men who are normally calm and composed that start complaining in front of them. They feel it’s ‘special’ and thus find you endearing – didn’t you know? Apparently after I go to sleep, Father often goes to Mother’s room to get her to spoil him as he grouches. The next day, they’re even more annoyin... lovey-dovey than usual. According to Father, the secret to a happy marriage is to occasionally trigger your wife’s maternal instincts.”

“W – what did you say!? T – they do such things!? H – how disgraceful. But well, if my wife enjoys it, some embarrassment on my part is... and if I could have my lovely wife comfort me, I may cheer up a little... but still...”

After opening his eyes wide at my words, he glances back in forth, looking agitated.

He’s quite similar to Lady Bertia in this way. It’s amusing.

“Marquis Noches, comfort is important at times even for us men. Also, Father told me that spouses should help each other. I believe that it’s important for you to be able to relax and get help at home precisely because you play an important role that helps support the heart of the country.”

“Y – you think so as well, your Highness? I see. I see, that’s true! I think I should be brave and try to get my wife to spoil me,” says the marquis, his eyes sparkling as he nods in agreement.

“Why of course,” I say, nodding back with a smile.

I feel like his motivation has shifted a little from getting advice about Lady Bertia to getting spoiled by his wife, but well, it doesn't really matter so long as it doesn't adversely affect me, I guess?

And it's probably good for my future parents-in-law to become closer.

“Very well then your Highness, I will now take my leave. Today, I will finish my work early no matter what and sneak into my wife's room... ahem... I mean, as I need to ask my wife for some important advice, after all.”

Your true intentions are written on your face, Marquis Noches.

But well, someone young and pure like me doesn't understand what he means in the slightest, after all.

...Let's pretend that I don't.

“That's true. It's about my precious fiancée, so please, take lots of time getting advice.”

“That's true. It is important. I'll spend the whole night asking for advice.”

“Right. Please do your best...”

My words are mainly intended for Lady Noches.



It's been exactly one year since I watched Marquis Noches leave, as I thought such things on the inside.

In the end, he did come talk to me again a number of times after that to gush over his family or complain about Lady Bertia, but I myself lived a fairly peaceful life.

On a side note, Lady Bertia would come to the castle and complain to me about how “Father won't turn evil!”

...Do they really understand my social status?

I'm not your family's personal counsellor, you know?

Well, let's put aside stories of the past for now – what matters now is Lady Bertia.

“That document was really well made. The illustrations were very lovely as well.”

“M – my! It is not something that deserves such high praise!” she says, flushing red. But from her expression, she doesn't think the praise is all bad.

“It was so good that I'd like you to use your talent to make a tourist guide or something of the like for the capital... by the way, were the contents of that document true? Did you interview someone?”

I smile even as I ask Lady Bertia herself the question that bothers me the most. As there was nothing about where she got the information, I have to ask.

The articles are too well written to be mere delusions.

The content is interesting, but if she had really written this based on interviews, it's a bit of a waste to leave it as just something to read.

If we know who to arrest, we ought to find evidence and arrest them.

“It's about 50-50! There's some parts I wrote based on my previous life's memories, and some parts I interviewed people for based on those memories.”

...Ignoring that first half, that second half seems a little dangerous, doesn't it?

“Oh, who did you interview?” I ask kindly, trying to avoid Lady Bertia raising her guard.

Suppressing an involuntary twitch, I fix a smile onto my face.

“Oh, Viscount Rolly Conservatier! He visited Father before, and when he did, I recalled, ‘Oh yes, he was one of the ones to drag Father to a path of evil, and became my husband in one of the destruction routes.’”

To be honest, I had been worried that she would hesitate to reveal who she interviewed... but it seems my worries were for naught.

She had absolutely no ill intent or selfish motives when she interviewed him. That's

probably why she can say the criminal's name with no hesitation... but I'm surprised Viscount Conservatier talked about his evil deeds to a woman with such a loose tongue – I mean, a woman so honest.

His actions are nothing but suicidal.

Oh, but she is still a child, so he might have figured that no one would take her seriously without evidence, based on her normal behaviour.

Marquis Noches probably did in fact not take her seriously, after all.

"There's kind of a lot of things that are bothering me... but for now, could you tell me how you got close enough to the Viscount to get him to tell you about things like that?"

"Oh, I wouldn't say that we're close. But since there's a route where I become his wife, I thought that he would find me attractive... so using my childish innocence, I praised and flattered him as I gazed at him with sparkling eyes. Before I realized it, he had placed me on his knee, given me sweets, and talked to me about so many things!"

"...So a honey trap, then."

"W-What are you saying, your Highness!? I wouldn't do something so unseemly!"

"Hey, Lady Bertia. Were you aware that Viscount Rolly Conservatier is a well-known lolicon – I mean, a pervert that looks at children with romantic interest?"

"...What!?"

"Did he touch you?"

"Now that you mention it, he told me that I was like a doll and embraced me, massaged my feet, and to my chest..."

Lady Bertia's face rapidly pales.

It seems as though she finally realized the dangerous situation she had been in.

"What happened afterwards?"

"He started to often send me letters. Lately, he's mentioned that he has stories to tell



me that he wants to keep secret from my parents, so he wants to meet in secret... no-o-o-o-o-oo!"

After speaking of her situation herself, Lady Bertia hunches down, her head in her hands, perhaps no longer being able to hold her fear back.

I sit next to her and softly rub her trembling back. Glancing at her maids, I see that they're pasty white as well.

It seems as though they hadn't thought that she had been in such a dangerous situation.

Viscount Rolly Conservatier is famous in darker circles, but most people know him as just a nice older man who loves children.

Well, I would've wanted them to realize something wrong from the sheer volume of the letters... but a number of those letters might've been handed to her through underground means.

"It's alright. I'll do something about it. I'm not so foolish to do nothing after someone does something to my fiancée."

"Your Highness..."

Lady Bertia was trembling, as if she were some kind of small animal. When I gently embrace her from the back, she looks up with a tear-streaked face.

"So to protect you, could you tell me whether you've interacted with any other dangerous folk?"

"I have not. I didn't have any opportunity to talk with Earl Commonolo or Baron Saugir, who incite Father to commit crimes in the game, so I planned to build connections with them after I made my social debut and have them meet with Father."

...I'll refrain from asking why she would have her father meet with bad people.

Well though, it's fairly clear that it wasn't because she wanted Marquis Noches to bring them back to the light or arrest them or something.

"Lady Bertia, could you refrain from doing dangerous things from now on?"

I can just enjoy watching her, correcting her course from time to time, so long as she's doing something that isn't dangerous. But it's not good for her to end up in a dangerous situation like this time without me realizing.

Even I wouldn't be able to enjoy it or think it amusing if something that couldn't be undone happened.

I can enjoy watching her – I mean, watch over her – precisely because she uselessly struggles – I mean, does her very best – in a safe situation.

“Yes, your Highness. Of course! I as well would not want to end up in a scary situation like this one again! And so, from now on... I shall be careful when I interact with them!”

Cheeks streaked with tears, she clenches her fists with her trembling body.

...Why won't she give that part up?

“No, it's dangerous just to interact with them, you know? It makes me feel uneasy.”

“It will be fine! As soon as I build a connection between them and Father, I'll run away!”

“That's not the issue...”

“If I lose here, your bright future will be destroyed! I will do my best!”

“I'm telling you...”

“Now that's decided...”

“No, can you not decide that?”

“Oh no! This isn't good! The party is going to start soon, but my makeup and hair is a mess!”

“...Are you listening to me?”

“Your Highness, I shall get myself ready again and return! I will return in time, so I shall take my leave!”

“Ah, you aren't listening to me at all... See you later.”

A wry smile on my face, I watch her dragged out of the room by her maids, gripping her pure white dress.

...Now then, what to do.

I really can't just leave things alone.

"Your Highness, what shall you do?"

"Mm, right. Could you quietly grab Marquis Noches and bring over here as soon as possible?"

"Grab... Marquis Noches?"

"Also, I will be writing a letter to my father while you get him, so once you finish leading him here, please secretly deliver this letter to my father as soon as possible."

"...Understood."

"I'm repeating myself, but secretly and as soon as possible, understood? I would like to finish the preliminary arrangements before she comes back... it'll definitely be troublesome if she becomes directly involved with the case."

"I understand. Secretly and as soon as possible, correct?"

Zeno, the picture of a capable servant, bows once before leaving.

As soon as I finish watching him leave, I begin writing my letter to Father.

"If I do this well without exposing her to danger, it might be a good opportunity to root out this county's evil."

As I said 'as soon as possible', Marquis Noches will likely be here soon.

I need to finish my letter by then, so I leave out the standard words of greeting and go straight into the main topic.

I write of how I heard rumours of Earl Commonolo, Baron Saugir, and Viscount Conservatier's ill deeds.

Of how it's possible that the three of them may try to contact Marquis Noches.

I concisely describe how I've decided to ask Marquis Noches to use their methods against them and contact them himself to obtain evidence against them.

I did embellish the details a little... but I'm doing the same thing either way, so it shouldn't really be a problem.

When I place my more-or-less finished letter in an envelope, I hear a knock on the door.

"Come in," I say.

Immediately afterwards, Marquis Noches bursts into the room, looking panicked.

"Your Highness, what is the matter!?"

It looks as though requesting that he come as soon as possible made him worried.

"Zeno, deliver this to Father. Marquis Noches, I have something very important to talk to you about. Please, sit down over there."

I hand the letter to Zeno then immediately sit down on the sofa across from the Marquis.

"The truth is..."

I tell Marquis Noches about everything I also described in my letter, then finally...

"Viscount Conservatier has apparently already made contact with your daughter, Lady Bertia. He has also apparently acted in an unseemly fashion towards her..."

"W-What did you say!?"

"Currently, he has only casually touched her body... but he's rumoured to be someone who holds romantic feelings towards children, so there's no doubt that he touched her in *that* way..."

"U-Unforgiveable!"

“Lady Bertia was the one to tell me this herself, but she was trembling and crying. So... if you could, don’t mention this in front of her. It’s probably painful for her to remember.”

“B-Bertia...”

“I’m thinking to deal with the situation ourselves, privately... preventing Lady Bertia from coming in contact with those who would bring her harm. Naturally, I’ve informed Father of this plan so there’s no misunderstandings... will you cooperate with me?”

Marquis Noches had been looking sorrowful as he thinks of Lady Bertia’s hurt feelings. But in an instant, his eyes begin burning with the flames of rage.

“Of course! I shall completely crush those maggots into little itsy bitsy pieces and chop it off!”

He clenches his fists. There’s naturally zero hesitation in his expression.

It would be more accurate to say that he’s ready to head off to war.

“I won’t ask *what* you’re going to chop off exactly... but I appreciate your cooperation. Well then, now that our conversation is over, you should leave before Lady Bertia returns.”

“Yes. It won’t do for my daughter to notice us and start worrying or hurting more.”

Nodding sharply at my words, Marquis Noches leaves the room, expression tight.

Preliminary arrangements have been completed for now.

Some of the three are likely attending today’s party, but they shouldn’t cause any problems now.

Marquis Noches will likely do his very best to crush them before they can, after all.

He is still this country’s prime minister.

While he forgets himself in private and lets his emotions get the better of him, he doesn’t do that in public. He’ll probably do it well.

...Probably.

“I might need to keep an eye out myself for a while too, perhaps?”

With my work done for now, I let out a loud sigh and lean back on the sofa.

I have a much bigger job to do after this – my social debut.

I’m feeling a little tired, so I’ll take a little break until Lady Bertia returns.

It seems as though my fiancée (*toy*) has been a bit too rambunctious lately.

# Chapter 5

## Bertia (12 years old)

“Your highness Cecil, We’ll be arriving to Marquis Nochesse’s mansion in a few moment.” *(Zeno)*

Inside the rocking carriage, Zeno slightly opened the curtain to peek outside.

“I understand” *(Cecil)*

While glancing at zeno, I could see the nostalgic scenery from the slight crevice between the curtain.

“Your highness, will lady bertia be alright?” *(Zeno)*

Even though the carriage is made to be sound proof, Zeno lowered his voice to ask for confirmation.

The “alright” that he mean, does it refer to physically or mentally?... If he’s referring to her brain, I will refrain from making any comment though.

“Hmmm, Since I haven’t meet her directly I wouldn’t know. Well there would be a little bit of disarray, but it’s her we’re talking about, so it would be just[The usual]” *(Cecil)*

We both leaked a wry smile.

“That is certainly true...” *(Zeno)*

“But to prevent something like last time, it would be better to ask her in advance right?”

“Yeah, that was certainly troublesome” *(Zeno)*

“Well that was in a sense interestin... cute in its own way, but my reputation is also at stake here” *(Cecil)*

Heaving a sigh, Zeno laughed while murmuring [I think that your highness will only make that kind of face for lady Bertia]

To counter the teasing zeno,

“If something like that were to happen again, the one that have to help me to erase the rumor would be Zeno though” *(Cecil)*

I smiled from ear to ear when replying.

“Y-your highness! Isn’t baby-sitting lady Bertia one of your responsibility?! Please try to wrap things up peacefully like before. Of course with all you got. Do you know how hard it is to clear up all the rumor?!” *(Zeno)*

Hearing my words, Zeno’s face changed. To the zeno that’s frantically complaining, I laughed.

By the way, when did I change my job to a baby-sitter for lady Bertia?

If there are no discrepancy in my memories, I was supposed to be a crown prince right...?

Whatever, she’s my fiancée *(toy)* anyway, looking after *(maintaining)* her is also one of my duties.

Furthermore, It has been almost a year since I entered Halm Academy.

Being in a dorm based academy, besides sending letter, there is no other way to actually contact her. A daily life without meeting to chat with her or looking after her was incredibly boring.

“But still, I think it would be better to keep rampaging around to a certain degree you know?” *(Cecil)*

While murmuring that, I heaved a sigh while remembering what drives me to visit marquis Nochesse’s mansion today, and the things that happened because of her rampage over the past few months.





It is about half a year after entering Halm academy.

I had finished all of the curriculum there.

I did attend the class but having learned everything there, I only took the pose of taking down notes and there was no other things to do.

...There was once an incident where I tried to discuss the Teacher's theory. Although the teacher started speaking with a sparkling eyes, the students around could not follow our discussion and spend the whole hour with their mouth opened. After that I restrained myself from repeating that.

By the way, not pointing out the mistake made by the teachers is one of my kindness to him.

There was no need to purposely pursue the connections that I'm supposed to make while in this academy by myself, since the people around would approach me by themselves. The only thing I need to do was to inspect their personality, motives, checking if they would bring good / bad influence to the country, and try to put them in my palm.

After entering the school and observing the situation, I managed to find a few people that seems interesting and let them enjoy their peaceful school life, while slowly training... befriended them.

Thus without me noticing, there are a lot of talented with some habits around me... But in the end it's just a talented noble's kid.

There was no one that are as interesting as lady bertia.

That's why to me, the student life here is a little bit lacking.

I can only look forward to lady Bertia's periodic letter.

To capture all the villain that lady bertia mentioned, seeing the undercover marquis Nochesse, she happily wrote, [Finally my father has awakened to the dark side!!]. While thinking [her naivety is so cute], I replied with [It seems marquis Nochesse is working hard for his cute daughter. ]

[But somehow as father entered the dark side, mother would also miss the breakfast with us. Could it be, mother didn't like the father that's entering the dark side and is trying to reduce the occasion to meet him? But on the evening when father returned early, she would happily welcome him and they looked like they get along. How strange...] Of course I wouldn't have 1 mm idea of what happened, and replied [I think in a married relationship there are things that are unknown to other people... Maybe if we grow up and were married to each other we could understand what's happening] while feeling [I'm sorry, but I'm happy that you look very delighted] to marchioness Nochesse.

That became one of my moment of tranquility.

As if to show her emotion when writing the letter, the handwritings are a little bit disarrayed and shaken. It also seems like she rewrote the letter a few times. Thinking what was her emotion when writing the letter makes me feel happy.

Then one day.

"Your highness Cecil!!!" (*bertia*)

The voice that shake the surrounding, I thought that was only my imagination.

If possible I would like it to be my imagination.

Because there's no way she would be there.

Because here is the front of Halm academy's boy's dorm.

Being a no-entry zone for female students, it's a place where she shouldn't come as she please.

While feeling unease, and convincing myself that a royalty shouldn't be flustered over little things, I made a smile and turned back... There as expected stood my fiancée, lady Bertia.

Furthermore in her hands, she hold the kuro the fox cum scarf on her hand.

In a great momentum, she started running to me. In front of the dorm's main gate, her made could only bow down with a wry smile that seems to say [We can only enter until here, please take care of her]

...As Expected, Nochesse family's maid are spoiling her.

No to be precise it's more like [ since I'm here, they'll just leaving everything to me].

From what I heard, when I'm not there, they act as her stopper.

I really need to have a talk with them soon.

"Lady bertia, what brings you to a place like this?" *(Cecil)*

"Your highness, what should I do..." *(Bertia)*

"Please calm down. I'll hear you out, but first we should change our location. You're technically an outsider and to boot it up you're also in a no female allowed area infront of the male dorm" *(Cecil)*

"Your highness, what should I do??? The child is going to be born soon!" *(Bertia)*

Without giving a heed to my suggestion to change our location, She jumped into my chest and started crying as soon as she saw my face.

Kuro still in between was looking troubled but this is not the time to care about that.

Hearing she screamed "The child is going to be born", all the students that happen to be there looked shocked and stared at me, Zeno also whistled behind me.

Could the please stop looking here with their glittering eyes looks like— we should just ignore whats happening here but even if a carnage is scary, we still want to know whats happening.

Even Zeno started to look at me with doubting eyes.

No matter how you think it's weird right?

Of course I'm at the age where child making is possible, and lady Bertia that grows up especially quick between her peers thus it was not exactly impossible.

But no matter how you think about it it's still too early for us you know?

Also, being a royalty, no, as a gentleman, I wouldn't lay a hand on my fiancée as long

as we're not officially married.

Hey, you, yeah you two don't whisper something like [As expected that's a bit...] and [No, but if it's that prince cecil you know it might be possible].

I heard it from here alright?

A certain relative among the nobles also looked at me in respect and said [A man amongst man].

That's something before [A man amongst man] you know, it breaks the gentleman code.

It might become a big scandal for the royal family.

.....From the day I was born, this is the first time I ever felt [Super flustered].

It makes me feel that I would look at my father—that's trying to make mother jealous by flirting with a young lady but unfortunately pissed mother off and got kicked out of the bedroom while saying [I want a divorce] as he cling to the door while being flustered. – with a kind eyes.

It's [feel that I would] though.

While thinking unrelated happenings, the people around us started to smile. I ignored all of them and started to console lady Bertia by caressing her back.

While getting caressed that she kept saying things that would bring more misunderstanding like [Sorry to cause trouble to you, your highness], [ It should be a very happy occasion but I just can't be happy about it. ], [Worrying from what might happen from now on, what should I do...].

I think I really should stop her right now.

How do I describe this, it feels my processing speed has become slower than usual.

Ahh... this must be what people say by [my mind getting blank]

If so, the sweat that I feel on my back even if the weather is cool must be what people said as having a cold sweat.

Wait this is not the time to think about those things.

“Lady Bertia, may I ask who was pregnant with whose child?” *(Cecil)*

As much as possible, I voiced it out with a gentle voice and a smile.

In truth I want to change our location even if it's a little bit forceful, but I think that's not the best course of action in this situation.

At least, I need to clear up all the misunderstanding made by all the students here. If not as soon as I took my eyes of them, all the school no the world will start rumoring about [ I made miss Bertia pregnant]

If that happened after I was married that's a great news.

But now it's really bad. A 13 years old prince made his 11 years old fiancée pregnant. That's nothing but bad news.

In here, I would need to clear up the misunderstanding straight from lady Bertia's mouth, changing the location can wait after that.

Unable to reply as she cried, I kept calling her name.

But even with that all that came out was sobbing sound thus I keep consoling her with [No need to worry]or [I'm here with you]. I also give a threatening gaze to the surrounding people that seems to say [Don't you dare to move from this place until you hear everything that happened] [If you dare to spread this rumor without knowing the truth... you know what would happen right?].

Seeming to understand that I'm being very serious, as I meet their eyes, their face started turning pale and nodded hurriedly.

“Lady Bertia, Please tell me what happened. Without knowing, I couldn't tell you the best course of action, and I also don't want my fiancée to be crying” *(Cecil)*

On the nth time, lady bertia finally looked at my eyes with her teary eyes.

That looks is somehow cute and alluring... the surrounding students let out a small gasp.

While keeping an eye on them on the corner or my vision, I tilted my head and peeked at lady Bertia so that I can quickly take her out of this place.

“Ah... I apologize. I got really flustered and somehow did a very rude things to your highness” *(Bertia)*

Realizing she was looking at my face at a very close distance, she looked away and her face started to turn red.

“Don’t mind it. So, who made who pregnant?” *(Cecil)*

Finally calmed down, I started to repeat my questions to her.

If she didn’t clearly speak it out here, I fear that the misunderstanding towards me won’t be cleared. That is the most important thing here.

“eh? Of course it would be mother that was pregnant with father’s child. Who else could it..... Ah, No It’s a misunderstanding. It’s not me you know, I haven’t even kissed yet... wait that’s not it. Please don’t misunderstand!!” *(Bertia)*

With a baffled face and wry smile I slightly replied her with [That kind of thing is a given right]. She seems to realize the looks from the surrounding and started to shake her head while getting away from me.

Finally having cleared all the misunderstanding towards me, the student around still look baffled and said[ eh, the children from their parents? It’s just have having a siblings right? Why is she so flustered then].

Lady bertia who was surrounded by the gaze and thought that the misunderstanding still hasn’t cleared up started crying with her face beet red while saying [It’s a misunderstanding].

“Don’t worry, I’m sure everyone knows it.” *(Cecil)*

I reached my hand before she started crying again.

“But it’s still not a good idea to speak here, should we change our location? Oh yeah do you want me to send you back with a carriage? We can also talk about this leisurely on the carriage” *(Cecil)*

She took my hands by reflex. I then pulled our joined hand to my free hand to escort her out forcefully.

Before leaving the place, just in case I also smiled to the students around and gave them the [Don't you dare to start a weird rumor. Understand? ] gaze.

Giving a glance to Zeno, he started to note down all the student's name that was there, and gave order to one of his subordinates to start preparing the carriage.

"eh, umm, don't worry about preparing the carriage since I rode one here. This place is located on the outskirts of the city so marathoning... taking a walk here is too far. That's why... umm " (*Bertia*)

Still embarrassed, she replied to my forceful invitation with her eyes still squirming around.

I think she looks very cute now but... Even considering to take a walk here seems a little bit too weird you know?

Halm academy is in the outskirts of the town. With a carriage or horse, you could easily reach it within 1 – 2 hours.

Since it's a academy with all student dorm policy, all the student need to stay within the school premises. But in truth if they have a mansion on the capital, it's not a distance that they can't cover going back and forth everyday.

But that is of course if they have a horse or a carriage.

At the very least it's not a distance where a normal daughter of marquis would say as [just about there].

"Please don't say that and let me escort you back. Don't make me look like I'm a useless guy that would refuse to meet his fiancée and sent her back." (*Cecil*)

I playfully gave her a wink, somehow her face turned even redder.

"I am very happy with the thought but, if I stay with you any longer, I fear that I might be embarrassed to death." (*Bertia*)

She whose body is turning red is very interesting... I mean cute.

The [worrying things] that she wanted to discuss with me seems to have lost to her [embarrassment] thus she forgot all her purpose of coming, and she looks very cute for not realizing that.

Looking at this fiancée (*toy*), don't you have the urge to tease her?

"don't worry, I'll make sure to do it until your[ first kiss]" (*Cecil*)

Moving closer to her ears, I spoke in a soft voice so that it could only be heard by her and breathed air to her ears

"....." (*Bertia*)

My fiancée that's as red as a ripe tomato is opening her mouth like a gold fish.

She seems to put too much power on her other hand that's holding kuro. Kuro seems to be hurt and started tapping her hand.

"Hmm? What happened?" (*Cecil*)

"....." (*Bertia*)

I feigned ignorance and tilted my head while seeking her reply.

"Bertia?" (*Cecil*)

It seems to be useless so I tried calling her name without honorific.

It's usually unforgivable for a normal daughter of a noble, but since she's my fiancée it should be okay right?

"MYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA" (*Bertia*)

"Eh, wait a second, Bertia?" (*Cecil*)

I seems to have overdone it... she overloaded.

She seemed to be unable to turn any redder than this thus to refuse my escort, she started running away in full speed.



“[myaaa...] bertia, have you became a cat...?” *(Cecil)*

To her that’s slowly leaving my sight, I laughed.

“.....Your highness?” *(Zeno)*

Zeno looked at me with a white eye while preparing the carriage.

“Sorry, She’s too cute and I unintentionally teased her...” *(Cecil)*

I assure you it’s not because I was paying her back for her unreasonable rampage that made me feel flustered.

It’s because she’s just too interesting... cute that I couldn’t help it.

“Now then, should we start to follow her?” *(Cecil)*

Is it because she ran everyday to keep her body fit? She ran in a magnificent way that you couldn’t think that it’s a daughter of a marquis that’s running at the moment. I couldn’t even see her back anymore.

But, since her maid was left here, I don’t think that she left by the Nochesse family’s carriage.

Besides, in the stables where their horse at, there should also be my subordinates preparing my carriage.

Since they know that I’m sending her home, they would of course try to stop her from leaving first.

“Don’t you both have to chase after bertia?” *(Cecil)*

Leisurely going out from the male dorm, I sent her maids a glance as they waited for me to pass while bowing their head.

“It is embarrassing but, with our current abilities, we couldn’t catch up with young lady anymore. There are other people that is chasing after her.” *(Maids)*

“hmmm I see” *(Cecil)*

Looking at the trees that's on the edge of my vision, I focused my sight.

There is someone strange there but as I expect it's her bodyguards.

Since I didn't feel any ill intent I let her be, but from now on it would be best to remember [her] presence.

.....By the way bertia, what are you trying to achieve by training until your maids couldn't catch up with you anymore.

Recently I also got a report that she's moving her body beyond mere dieting.

If possible please keep it contained... A macho crown princess is a little bit...

"Alright lets chase after her."

Behind me, Zeno and the maids followed.

It would be great if she could calm down a little by the time we reached the stables



In the end after that, I managed to send Bertia home. She was too embarrassed to have a proper conversation though, so I couldn't have a thorough talk with her.

From what I understand from what she told me, Originally marchioness Nochesse was already dead at this time, thus there should be no way that a she would have a brother. But since now she is pregnant with him, there will be a big change to the [scenario].

Thus that made her very worried about the future.

"I told her that there is a possibility of it being another daughter... a male heir is splendidly born. It should be a happy occasion but because of that Bertia's anxiety reached it's climax." (*Cecil*)

"I'm pretty sure she's crying herself to sleep right now" (*Zeno*)

"Well it's bertia we're talking about you know. It might take time but let's hear her out. Who knows just listening to her might clear up her anxiety too.

“Did lady bertia didn’t mention anything about it in the letter she sent to you?” *(Zeno)*

“She did write something there, but her explanation revolves around [conquerable target], [event], [cool-dere], [flags]... It doesn’t make any sense right? Nevertheless, since I can’t make any moves since I don’t know the gender of the soon to be born baby, I put off writing anything important by telling her [I’ll be visiting you soon, let’s talk when we meet]. If I wrote something bad and she rampaged again it won’t be funny you know?

When the letter announcing that the baby boy was born from the Nochesse family, A new letter from bertia came. It seems she is perplexed because she was happy and worried at the same time.

To be honest, deciphering it was a real pain. Rather than writing a reply to ask her about things that doesn’t make sense, I thought it would be better to visit her using my status as a fiancée to congratulate the new born nochesse heir as a pretense.

.....it’s also to prevent her from rushing into the boy’s dorm again.

The matter that time was somehow forcefully settled by emphasizing that we are a lovey-dovy engaged couple and she rampages there because she was too happy that she will get a sibling soon.

If she repeatedly does that, there would be a very big trouble.

Furthermore, what put me off the most is the people that surrounds me usually would give me [what a passionate lover] looks and I want to prevent that if possible.

“Observing her is fun, though her unpredictable actions do bring troubles here and there” *(Cecil)*

“Oh... I thought you liked it very much?” *(Zeno)*

“Only as a means to pass time though” *(Cecil)*

Heaving a sigh, I can see Zeno smiling.

Right at this moment, the carriage stop, signaling that we have arrived in Nochesse mansion.

“Your highness Cecil, thank you for coming all this way to congratulate the birth of our son” (*douglas*)

Marquis Nochesse, having been prior informed of our arrival greeted us. After giving the gift, I finally met my future brother in law Arnest and marchioness Nochesse.

Marchioness Nochesse, like Bertia has a crimson red and she looked like a very gentle woman. Having just giving childbirth, she apologizes for her improper dress and light makeup, but she is still a very pretty lady.

And in Bertia’s unaccustomed hand was the new born baby —- arnest he’s a [normal] cute baby.

It’s not my first time to look at a baby since I have siblings.

I don’t hate kids, and I think they’re very cute.

But, witnessing bertia’s rampage all this time, made me think that the new born baby was not a normal boy.

If I think about it carefully, he being born is because bertia made changes to the [scenario].

In the first place, I still don’t know how much I should believe that the [scenario] actually exist.

The epidemic certainly did happen, but with just a little work it was easily neutralized.

Maybe this time it’s the same as that time, and I felt that she shouldn’t worry about it too much.

“Your highness, this is my brother arnest. He’s cute isn’t it? His cheeks is plump and his hand is also soft. If I just touch him a bit he’ll hold on to me you know? He’s really cute..... what should I do?” (*Bertia*)

Being considerate to the sleepy brother, bertia spoke in a voice gentler than usual and dote on her brother.

She looks happy while looking at him with a warm gaze.

But the warm gaze that looked happy, soon turned to a pleading eyes that ask for help.

Maybe it's because she's in front of her brother so she didn't cry like Zeno predicted her, but I'm pretty sure her heart is full of anxiety now

.....It can't be helping.

"Miss Bertia, isn't it about time for your brother to be resting?" *(Cecil)*

Hinting that his eyes are slowly closing, Marchioness Nochesse gently took over the baby.

The marquis stands at the side while smiling happily.

"emm, then do you want to have tea while Ernest is still sleeping your highness?" *(Bertia)*

Understanding my hints, Bertia passes her brother to the Marchioness and invited me to a tea.

"Yeah, let's have a tea on our proud garden..." *(Douglas)*

"Father, could you please don't interrupt my long awaited meeting with my fiancé? How unbecoming" *(Bertia)*

The marquis who wanted to have tea together with us was quickly turned down by Bertia.

I feel sorry for the marquis but the talk wouldn't proceed if there are other people.

Startled by Bertia's word, the marquis was stunned. Without realizing, Kuro went beside him and hit his feet with its tail as if to tell him [Can't you read the mood?].

"But still..." *(Douglas)*

He looked at me with a reluctant gaze and shook his head to regain his composure.

Even by pretense, I did come to [congratulate the Nochesse family for their new born heir]

By right it should be marquis Nochesse himself that accommodate the guest as the head of the family. Even if bertia is my fiancée, leaving it all to her gives him a bad taste.

“I also haven’t talked with lady Bertia in a long time, Can I have a little time for just the two of us?” *(Cecil)*

Since I gave marquis Nochesse the approval, he felt relieved and nodded his head.

Leaving a young boy-girl that has done their social debut is bad usually, but since we are engaged and there is her maid and zeno behind us, there should be no problem. Not to forget kuro is also there with us.

Also marquis and I also talked a lot about bertia, thus he should have trust on me. If I gave him the approval there is no reason for him to refuse.

“Then, lets heed to my room” *(Bertia)*

“Bertia, the door” *(Douglas)*

“I’ll make sure to leave some openings” *(Bertia)*

Looking startled at bertia crossing arm with me, marquis nochesse’s expression stiffened and gave her a warning. She seemed annoyed by it and brought me to her room.

Marquis nochesse, there is a feeling of trust between us right? It’s not like you’re doubting me right?

And bertia, why don’t you doubt me a little as a man?

Suddenly inviting to your room, a teenager... even a child growing up, as a lady that finishes her social debut, it is still somewhat inappropriate you know?

Even if you’re inviting, try to show a little bit of wary.

Well I’m quite interested at your room and since you gave me the permission I’ll come inside though...

Bertia’s room has that cute atmosphere in it, and it is tidy contrary to my expectations.

The light yellow paint on the wall and the white laced curtain.

The dark blue carpet that looks like a night sky.

The furniture that's mixed between white and dark brown color are somehow balanced perfectly

There are lots of cute dolls and statues with laces and it made you think that it's a girl's room.

Come to think of it, Bertia likes to wear light yellow or dark blue clothes, does she like this color?

...There's no way that it's because it's my color right?

The possibilities that unintentionally came at the back of my head made me unable to look at her directly.

"Your highness, I'm really sorry about my brother" (*Bertia*)

Bertia bows her head deep after her maid prepared tea and left the place.

But, I don't remember she doing something that she should apologize for.

"Bertia, please raise your head. I don't understand why you're apologizing. That's why first please tell me what's worrying you." (*Cecil*)

"Your Highness" (*Bertia*)

Raising her head, with tears that slightly appear on her face, she began to talk.

I asked a lot of questions while she tak to confirm the details and finally I could [Understand] her story.

...In the end I could only [understand], there are a lots of place where I want to retort.

"In short, in the original [scenario], only having one daughter and having no chance to have a heir, the marquis selected a talented person from the branch family and adopted him. That guy is one of the [conquerable target] but since now your mother gave birth to a son, the [scenario] is completely broken

“That’s right. Originally, gulgan. dress. nochesse should have been adopted by our family. Having the support of nobles as backing, he couldn’t run away and was abused by father in the name of education. And he would then with your highness attend the halm academy as a second year. He is also incredibly gifted and would serve you as one of your close aides.

I see, since a heir has been born, the chance of him being adopted to this family would be 0.

Thus, even if he’s from the branch family of nochesse, without a proper rank in court and monetary problems, there is no way he would enter Halm academy.

If he is really as talented as she speak him to be, it would be such a waste.

“Then if we proceed as the [scenario] goes, mr. Gulgan would eventually fall in love with the [heroine]. But being educated to be the heir of the nochesse family, he inherited some of the dark side. The serious him couldn’t defy fathers order because his family was taken as hostage. Being conflicted and not knowing what to do, the least he could do is to let go of the pure [heroine] that he admire as to not let her get corrupted too.” *(Bertia)*

“I see... By the way bertia, last time you said that I’m the one who’s going to be tied the [heroine] right? Why is there another [heroine] tied [conquering target] appearing now?” *(Cecil)*

A single woman being tied with 2 guys.

What a weird situation.

If it’s the opposite though, if it’s a royalty trying to preserve his blood line, it should be easily approved.

“oh... it’s my mistake. Did I forgot to mention that there are multiple [conquerable targets] and the [heroine] would be tied to the one she’s closest with?” *(Bertia)*

“.....yeah, I haven’t heard it at all. But wait, then if so there’s no need for you to be a [villainess] and for me to [break our engagement] right? She should just choose other people” *(Cecil)*

How could you ever forgot such an important things.



"I-i won't allow it! Since nochesse family would also fall to ruin in other routes, if that's the case, I wanted to make my fiancé, you at least be happy by my sacrifice. That is the pride of a first class flowers of veil!" *(Bertia)*

I think a normal flowers of evil, would never choose to sacrifice herself for the sake of her fiancé though.

"Besides if that didn't go like that..." *(Bertia)*

"Bertia?" *(Cecil)*

"No there is nothing!! A-Anyways, you need to become better than everyone else, surpass every other conquerable target and be happy with the [heroine]. I hate reverse harem so if possible I wanted to avoid that at any cost!" *(Bertia)*

Just now she averted her eyes right...?

What is she trying to hide? Is it something that she doesn't want to say? Then I shouldn't pry too deep into it... but I'm very curious.

"Fuunn, so I should just surpass all my other rival and go out with that [heroine] right?" *(Cecil)*

Honestly speaking, I don't have any interest to other woman after having bertia as my fiancée.

I don't want to be such un-loyal man you know bertia.

But if I tell her that here, I bet she will rampage around again... Thus I'll just refrain from saying anything and try to change the topic.

"Then, who else is the conquerable targets?" *(Cecil)*

"All of your loyal retainers" *(Bertia)*

"All?" *(Cecil)*

"Yeah, all. If I have to give names, then it would be the heir of the current knight captain, Bard Nokins, The second son of duke Charles Leonel, The heir of the current ministry of affairs nert gram, then at the end was the prime minister's son gulgan.

Then including your brother, the second prince Shaun turquoise(?) alfostr." *(Bertia)*

I was a little bit surprised.

Other than gulgan who has the same age with miss bertia and haven't entered the school and my brother Shaun, the others were all the people I'm close with at the Halm academy.

"In this case it's because [scenario]'s [compelling force] created [proper path], when the time comes, there will be a forced [event] and all of you would admire the [heroine]." *(Bertia)*

Slightly excited, bertia started talking about unknown things again.

"but... but... the route for gulgan, deteriorate into unfixable situation and the [scenario] would also break. If the [compelling force], forces him to enter our house as an adopted son, then I fear something bad would happen to arnest" *(Bertia)*

Her tension lowered, her body started to shake and beads tears started appearing in her eyes.

In no time, she started to cry.

"If the [compelling force] didn't activate, then in your highness's route and the reverse harem route, you would lose your talented [shadow] that would help you uncover the corruption made by nochesse family." *(Bertia)*

Leaving aside her brother arnest that may have something bad happened to him, and me losing my talented [shadow] – someone who provides information. Isn't [helping my family fall into ruins] is far a tad grieving situation?

No but, if what she says about the role is all true, then I could use this...

"Bertia, in short, as long as that gul-whatever guy to enter the halm academy and become one of my close aides, then there would be no problem right?" *(Cecil)*

"eeh? I think that should be the case... it's only a possibility though" *(Bertia)*

"I see, then I have a great plan" *(Cecil)*

“Eh?” *(Bertia)*

“To sum it up, we should just let him be adopted by other family and enter the halm academy. He becoming my close aides would depends on his abilities. But if he is as talented as you say he is, then there should be no problem.” *(Cecil)*

“That might be possible, but...” *(Bertia)*

“I have an good idea, just leave it to me” *(Cecil)*

“Really?” *(Bertia)*

“Yeah so please stop crying.” *(Cecil)*

“Your highness” *(Bertia)*

There is coincidently a good candidate.

One of the family that was the target of the spy activity of marquis nochesse have been communicating with a troublesome ones.

That house, as far as I know, shouldn't have any heir at the moment. I should just request marquis Nochesse to adopt him to the family as a spy cum bodyguard and have him infiltrate the house.

To make sure that there is no real harm to his family, I could even order the royal families spies to pose as their family or assign a guard to them or have marquis nochesse took them as a hostage to protect them.

At that time I should just improvise in accordance to his wish.

To be our spies as a condition of course we would support him, and if he is really talented [shadow] I will reward him appropriately.

Nevertheless it's still if he and his family wishes for it. I want to make this a good relationship with him just in case this works perfectly.

Yeah that should solve everything.

“By the way bertia, I've been wondering since earlier. What is [Reverse harem]?” *(cecil)*

After reaching a solution to her problems, I started asking about the word that I've been ignoring since the start of our conversation.

"[Reverse harem] is a situation where a single girl with a number of guys... having a relationship at the same time." (*Bertia*)

"That's how it is, for me I think that loving a single person wholeheartedly has that kind of beauty so I don't really like it, but there is certainly a [route] that leads to that." (*Bertia*)

"Impossible" (*Cecil*)

To have a single girl having relationship with multiple guys and further to share it between them is just impossible.

Furthermore if all of the people sharing, is my close aides—the one that would govern the country from in the future.

If there is such a thing, all kinds and scandals, and succession problems would come like a wave.

In the first place, having relationship with other people after entering the court as the king or crown prince's partner... That in itself is already lese majeste.

In the worst case, the next crown prince won't have the royal bloodline anymore.

Besides, counting 100 steps back, I don't like that kind of loose woman.

There is not even a shred of loyalty within her.

Don't even mention as the queen, the thought of having her as the concubine is already preposterous.

"Including me, I don't think all of my friends would have a good impression on girl that would have multiple relationship at the same time." (*Cecil*)

"Even so, because they loved each other and can't bear to separate, thus choose to share it between them. That kind of [routes] also existed." (*Bertia*)

"That's why I said that's impossible. We are not that idiotic." (*Cecil*)

“hmmm at this kind settings there usually are some cases where [charm magic had been used], but it’s impossible. If so, then it should be that the [heroine]’s charm is too strong and you can’t defy it? In reality, you won’t know until you have already experienced it.” *(Bertia)*

“[Charming magic]?” *(Cecil)*

“It’s a mental interference type of magic. It has the effect of increasing the individual’s charms. But that kind of thing doesn’t exist in this world so there is no way the she could use it.” *(Bertia)*

“Eh?? But magic exist you know?” *(Cecil)*

“I know right, there is no way it exist” *(Bertia)*

“That’s what I’ve been saying, it exist you know?” *(Cecil)*

“What exactly exist?” *(Bertia)*

“Magic exist... well to be exact it’s borrowing the power of the spirit, you could do something similar to the magic you see in the books. But since the spirits always do as they pleases, it’s a rare case that they would make a contract with anyone. Usually they would just make mimicry of things or turn invisible, even being able to be able to look at their figures are very rare and only happens to a small amount of people. That’s why to prevent needless disorder and also to prevent idiots from catching spirits to be able to use magic, only a small amount of high ranked nobles knew about the existence of a spirit. Oh by the way, marquis nochesse also knew about it.”

Hearing me, bertia stood there and opened her eyes widely.

.....From my point of view, bertia not knowing the existence of the spirits are far more shocking though.

“Hm... but it’s the magic that makes people admires you. How many elements of the spirits would one need to have to be able to do that?” *(Cecil)*

“Please wait a moment. I , my brain still couldn’t process all of this...” *(Bertia)*

“Mental interference... ah. The light attribute spirit should be able to do something similar to that.” *(Cecil)*

“Errr... your highness...” *(Bertia)*

“A higher rank of light spirit would be able to use [Healing light], since that give a holy presence that would cleanse the impurities, it should give people nearby a sense of euphoria. I see now, that’s why when you’re nearby that girl people would be able to feel euphoria endlessly. After a long time, that kind of feelings became a given and you would be extremely terrified if you were to leave her side. That makes people’s reliance to that girl became higher, and even if there are other partner of that girl, they are reluctant to leave her.” *(Cecil)*

“Wait... Don’t call people as if they are a walking narcotics(ma-yaku).” *(Bertia)*

“hmm...? It’s not [narcotics] (ma yaku) you know? It’s a [Magic] (*maryoku*) that could be used by human after they have made a contract with a spirit. Although their effects are also pretty similar.” *(Cecil)*

“NOOOO!! That kind on unrealistic talk, I wouldn’t believe it. In the first place I haven’t even fully believed about magic and spirits, more like it’s impossible to just believe it!” *(Bertia)*

She shook her head in a great momentum, I unintentionally leaked a wry smile.

I thought she should have noticed it by now, but it seems like she hasn’t realized it at all

“What are you even saying? You and I have already contracted with a spirit you know?” *(Cecil)*

“HUH?” *(Bertia)*

Having no idea on what I’m talking about, she keep looking around for the spirit.

Being dense to this degree... I’m amazed.

Thus I stood up from my seat and pick up the black fox that has been sleeping around her legs.

“here, this is your contract spirit. It’s a high ranked dark element spirit [Kuro]. Since a contract with a spirit involves giving it a name and offering a blood, this spirit is without a doubt your partner.” *(Cecil)*

Kuro started using its tail to hit my hand as if to say, [Wait, don't go touching me without permission if you're not my master]. Kuro then went back to its usual position above Bertia's tight.

"Eh? Huh? What are you talking about? Kuro is just a black fox..." *(Bertia)*

"That is just its mimicry. A normal black fox wouldn't be able to be half floating while posing obediently as a scarf and circle around one neck, and also it couldn't make people not acknowledged by its owner to see its true self you know?" *(Cecil)*

"What... that's impossible, did kuro even did such a feat?" *(Bertia)*

Bertia hold up kuro with an up-up away pose and started shaking it back and forth.

Ah kuro started panicking and used its tail to hit her hand, but it seems she didn't notice it at all.

"....."

From my point of view I really would like to ask [How did you not notice it after all of this time?]

"By the way, zeno is my contracted spirit you know? He is in a sense a hybrid that inherits the spirit king's blood. His main element is water and its secondary element is wind. But if it's until intermediate level magic, he could use all the other elements. Usually he would use mimicry as my butler so I didn't allow him to use any magic though.

"T-That's a lie..." *(Bertia)*

"Of course it's a lie" *(Cecil)*

Although it might be interesting to see her reactions and stayed silent, I don't want to lie anymore about this matter.

"that is... But isn't dark element makes me look like a villainess?" *(Bertia)*

"Ah even if it's dark element, it's more like the image it brings. A dark spirit would usually be able to interfere with spaces, and it's an element most suitable for defense." *(Cecil)*

“D-defense? It’s such unlike a villainess” *(Bertia)*

...first, why don’t we leave aside on what basis are she placing the standard to be villain like.

“But you see having a high ranked dark element’s defense magic, you could cancel out a light spirits interference you know?”

“What do you mean by that?” *(Bertia)*

“Hm...? In short, if you try your best with kuro, you could almost make the possibility of her making a [reverse harem] to almost 0 percent.” *(Cecil)*

“EH??” *(Bertia)*

“It’s great isn’t it, now 2 of the problem has been settled.” *(Cecil)*

“EHH?” *(Bertia)*

“Ah, if possible could you please learn magic to a certain degree before you enter the academy? If you discuss with marquis nochesse I’m sure he will give you all the required materials” *(Cecil)*

Smiling with a feeling of [Do your best], I pat both of her shoulders

“Ehhhhhhhh?!?” *(Bertia)*

Reacting to the voice that reverberated in the mansion, it didn’t took a few minutes for marquis nochesse to come here.

It was also a few minutes later that marquis Nochesse is baffled on the fact that Bertia had only just noticed that kuro is actually a spirit and let out a heavy sigh.



# Chapter 6

## Bertia (13 years old)

“Today I am happy to be given the chance to meet and study together in this academy with all of you.

There are a lot of students sitting in the lecture hall.

In the midst of all that, a student stood on the stage. Being a 3 year and somehow got the responsibility of student council president pushed to me, I made a speech in front of everyone.

To finish up the long greeting, I took a breath and glanced over the whole student bodies, and located on the front seat of the girl’s area sat that person.

With a crimson hair tied up, she looked at me with her lapis-blue eyes.

I let out a smile not realizing when her looks became so charming, and her appearance that stood out in the midst of people even without making troubles.

“Welcome to Halm academy, congratulations on your entry”

Putting strength on my stomach so that everyone in the hall could hear my closing speech with the voice that become deeper since a few years ago, a loud applause has been raised.

Bertia. Evil. Nochesse 13 years old

Today my fiancée finally entered the Halm academy middle school section.

“Iyaaa ~ as expected as your highness cecil’s flower. Even if the surrounding ladies are beautiful, she still catches my sight.” (*Charles*)

After finishing the entrance ceremony, finishing orientation, and giving other required orders to the student, I returned back to the student council room. There Charles. Leonel sat on the sofa and looked at me while smirking.

While still looking over the remaining documents, I looked up to meet his eyes and replied [is that so] while smiling.

I'm sure, he is bringing up bertia just to look at my reaction and tease me on it. Since falling to that tricks won't bring me any benefits, I just brush it up halfheartedly.

I need to finish up the documents as soon as possible since there is a place that I must go. I have no time to play with him now.

"But, even though I heard from the story, lady bertia is really pretty. O-Ofcourse since it's brother's fiancée I won't do any illicit love. Ah, but since we are on the same class, I should try to befriend my future sister in law." *(Shaun)*

Sitting beside Charles, stuffing cakes into his mouth is my younger brother, sean. Turquoise. Alfoster, who just enrolled today was smiling without any ill intent.

To that I replied [I'm sure bertia would be very delighted] to sean with a smile, and his smile turned brighter.

Having a lighter blond hair than me, my brother has the same face features as me, and our smiling expression should be the same... although recently, certain group of people started to describe his smile as angelic and mine as fiendish.

Why is it though... I can't understand

"What about Bart, Nert and Gulgan, how do you guys think about her?" *(Charles)*

Since my response is too shallow, Charles started bringing the talk to Nert who's hugging his feet while reading book, Bart who's drinking tea in-front of him, and also Gulgan who's sitting on his personal table doing paperworks.

"Since It's someone that the prince choose, I have no right to do something as rude as having comment on her. It's disturbing my work so don't talk to me at the moment" *(Gulgan)*

The first one who replied him is Gulgan.

"Come to think of if, Gulgan is originally from nochesse family right? Haven't you guys met until today?" *(Charles)*

“Since I’m from the branch family, I only looked at them from the sides. Since Lady Bertia came from the main family, I don’t have the right to speak with her.

Gulgan with his serious personality, didn’t want to accompany Charles with his talk, never took an eye off from his documents while talking, as if to show that he refused to participate in the talk anymore.

Charles also noticed that Gulgan with his serious personality would not reply to him anymore so he left him out from the talk and shrugged his shoulder.

Gulgan. Dress. Nochesse, and changed to Gulgan Dress Uradil.

After becoming the son of earl Uradil, as Bertia foretold is a highly talented person.

After finishing the talk with Bertia, I made a thorough investigation on him, and found out that it is really a shame to have someone as capable as him buried within the branch family of the nochesse family. Thus after discussing with marquis Nochesse, we sent him to infiltrate earl uradil’s house as an adopted son to watch over things.

Of course this brings a certain amount of risk, so there might be a possibility of him and his family to reject the proposal but... he and his family happily became my subordinates.

He also said [To think that someone such as me that came from the branch family that couldn’t be called a noble could be selected by your highness to serve you. I shall repay this kindness by swearing my loyalty to you, please leave this matter to me. ] while kneeling like a knight with tears flowing. That made me almost avert my eyes. But since in the end things turn out well let’s leave it at that.

Of course even if you rip my mouth open, I won’t say that I’m putting my eyes on him because of bertia’s past memories.

After that, he managed to infiltrate Uradil’s house as its adopted son and worked for me in the academy.

His way of thinking is a bit rigid, so he’s still in the middle of his training as a [shadow]

With his sense of purpose to eliminate evil, and loyalty towards me, He’s quick to absorb the teaching thus I should be able to expect a lot of things from him in the future.

What a good loot.

In this matter, I must give my thanks to Bertia.

“Baartzzz, how do you think about her?” *(Charles)*

A man with a big body as his characteristics – Bart nokins, Charles switch the conversation target to him who’s drinking tea with a cup that looks miniscule compared to his body.

“I’m talking about lady Bertia. It’s the bishojo that stood out in the girl’s group on the entrance ceremony.” *(Charles)*

...He’s giving her a good evaluation just because he doesn’t know how she usually behaves.

If he saw how she behaved, I’m sure he would be surprised by the gap of her appearance and personality.

Well, for me the gap is included in my interest.

“Ahhh, the one with crimson hair” *(Bart)*

“Yeah that one! What do you think about her from your perspective” *(Charles)*

“She’s a splendid woman” *(Bart)*

Seeming to imagine bertia’s figure in his head, Bart closed his eyes while nodding. Seeing him... somehow I have this irritating feeling in my chest.

“I know right? I always thought that you are single minded about martial arts, contrarily you do know your stuff about woman huh” *(Charles)*

“Of course. That beautiful legs and chest, the line that stretches from both of her arms to wrist, furthermore that waist line. It’s splendid” *(Bart)*

“Oh my. So your interest lies there. What a youth like viewpoint” *(Charles)*

Charles smiled with his perverted smile, while shaun’s face turned red.

...Bart, what the hell are you saying right in front of her fiancé?

Seems like he needs to be reeducated.

“Of course! Even though it’s still too early to be used in a fight, she’s still one of the most trained one in the midst of all noble woman. To boot it up, the muscles she trained are perfectly calculated and didn’t make her look macho. It’s nothing but splendid!” *(Bart)*

...no, somehow the education he needs is different from what I originally thought.

Mostly about how to interact, approach and thought about females.

He is someone who would be entrusted with my safety. If he made such a rude remark on duty to foreign diplomats it’s not gonna be funny.

This also couldn’t be counted as a compliment if spoken to a man.

I doubt there will be someone who’s happy if his wife is praised as [having superb quality muscles].

Even if there is someone who’s happy I think that it’d be on the minority.

Rather than betting on a bet with almost no chance of winning, and do my best to follow up on his misses, it’s better to lead him back to the proper path.

“Oi oi Bart, No matter how good her proportion is, a noblewoman won’t train until such a degree you know? A normal noblewoman won’t even be doing any exercise.” *(Charles)*

“No, I’m sure that is a result of training. She must have done quite an amount of running and muscle training.” *(Bart)*

“That’s why I said it’s impossible. A noblewoman amongst noblewoman such as lady Bertia won’t do such a thing. I don’t mind if you’re assuming or whatnot but don’t say such a thing in front of her alright? She’ll get pissed.” *(Charles)*

Charles retorted Bart with a wry smile.

Charles may like to make jokes on things, but once you knew him well, he’s the type

that's considerate to others.

That's why, I'm sure even this advice was because he cares for Bart and try to tell him about the common situation... I'm sorry to say this, but Bart's hit the bulls-eye here.

Yeah this is that... Before doing Bart's reeducation, I should do something on Bertia's stamina training called diet that I've been worrying for quite sometime.

But noblewoman amongst noblewoman huh.....

From the [Envoy] that I sent to her house, to learn the prideful conduct (like a villainess)-This is by any means the evaluation result of her everyday training... Her evaluation of herself seems to be very different from others' evaluation.

That's why, if she focuses on it, she would somehow be able to handle the things. But once she relaxed or flustered, her mask would fall in no time.

On the very least, there was not a single time where her mask didn't fall in front of me.

As a result, people who always hang out with me would know her true nature in no time at all..... I'm looking forward to their reactions.

To hide the smile that uncontrollable began to form, I raised the document in my hand just enough to cover my mouth.

Behind me, Zeno who look over the conversation between Bart and Charles can be seen to be averting his eyes somewhere.

"Hey Nert, don't just focus on your book and say something" *(Charles)*

After trying his best to change Bart's opinion but with no avail, Charles bring the topic to Nert.

Nert who was relieved when the talk was brought into Bart, reluctantly raised his face when called.

"mu... It's impossible. It's Bart we're talking about" *(Nert)*

"you're right it's Bart indeed..." *(Charles)*

Charles smiled wryly to Nert's reply.

Bart is the type of guy where no one would have any opinion on his battle potential, but on these kind of noble-social situation, no... he's hopeless on any social situation.

Furthermore, since he's quite reckless, once he decided, he wouldn't bend to anything or anyone.

.....For me, by making use of his honesty me he'll be very easy to manipulate to do my bidding.

Anyway, since this is the core of his personality, I don't think it can be changed easily in a situation like this.

This is also understood by Nert and Charles, and that's why they just leave the talk at [Well it is Bart].

"Then, what do Nert think?" *(Charles)*

"Hm? About lady Bertia?" *(Nert)*

"Yeah, if possible I wanted your honest opinion" *(Charles)*

...Charles, it's useless even if you send a glance to me. I'm busy checking the documents right now so I don't have the leisure to give you an interesting reaction.

Won't he give up just by me almost smiling when we talk about Bertia's muscle training?

"Uuun, I'm kinda bad with that kind of smart looking people... It feels like I was going to get scolded and it scares me." *(Nert)*

.....hmm? Who are they talking about again?

"Ah. She is definitely beautiful, but she also has that cool side, like someone who would speak straight to the point. From my point of view, I don't mind getting scolded by someone as beautiful as her though" *(Charles)*

That's why, who are you guys talking about again?

By the way, I may be scolded by Bertia for quite a number of times, but I think instead of [straight to the point], it's more like she saying something completely off the point and complaining while crying pattern you know?

Oh, could it be that? Since her eyes are big on top of that having a pointy edge like a cat, it gives people a strict impression?

Or maybe, since recently she's started being sentient to be [A first rate Villaines], and she started to put her makeup to have a stricter impression.

Yeah, a normal viewpoint is really interesting.

"...Your highness, it's about time" (*Zeno*)

Just as I'm looking at the last set of documents, Zeno came to my side without making a sound and informed me.

So it's already time.

Looking at the time, it seems that I might not make it if I don't leave now.

Quickly stamping the last document, I put it on the top of the stack of processed documents.

"Sorry, but I need to take my leave now" (*Cecil*)

Standing up, I smiled to everyone who's hyped up while talking about bertia.

"It's only half past 2 you know? It's rare since you always stayed longer for work. Ah, are you going to visit lady Bertia now?" (*Charles*)

"Yeah, is there any problem?" (*Cecil*)

Smiling while tilting my head, Charles opened his eyes wide as if to say [Are you kidding me?].

"It's a given to at least meet my cute fiancée after she had enrolled to the school right? Besides I haven't directly congratulate her for her enrolment." (*Cecil*)

The congratulations I said during my greeting on the hall is directed to the whole



student body and not solely to her so I take it as one.

Using my eyes, I asked Zeno to take the pre-prepared congratulatory gift.

“In the first place, you guys also had someone who should be congratulated too right?”

Saying that I looked through every member. Everyone except Gulgan leaked a small [Ah!] while averting their gazes.

This must be the – There is someone who must be congratulated, but I kinda forgot about it— atmosphere.

“I never expect to be reminded of such a thing by your highness. To you who would please every student body despite having a no interest face.” *(Charles)*

“That’s not true you know? I’ll have interest on someone I thought as interesting.” *(Cecil)*

“Using [interesting] as standard is so like yourself...” *(Charles)*

Charles who let out a wry smile slowly raised up both of his hand as if surrendering while shrugging his shoulder, after I replied with a silent smile.

How strange of him to do that when I was just smiling.

“Alright, it’s time for me to go. I’ve made a promise to attend the tea party in the afternoon” *(Cecil)*

It is a silent tradition for newly enrolled middle school division student to host a tea party in the restaurant on the afternoon of the day of enrolment.

When you reach the high school division, they would host a dance party on the night of the enrolment of graduation day. But there is no such thing for the middle school division so they did this instead.

Nobleman and noblewoman who had the power and connection would prepare and host these event, inviting every acquaintance no matter if they’re new students, or senior students.

The lower class nobles which don’t have the power and connection would use their

limited connection to get invited by the higher class nobles.

In regards of two high class nobles, there is no need to explicitly prepare their own event, there is also the option of attending the event of someone of the same class or even higher class to try and deepen their connection.

As a result, by attending or hosting the enrolment day tea party event, using [A chance to create and deepen relationship. Furthermore to be able to get used to the school life earlier] as a pretense, they would flaunt their connection and establish a hierarchy inside the school.

By the way, the member of my party is everyone in the student council except Gulgan.

At the time of enrolment, I still haven't decided on the candidates for my close aides. By prioritizing the invitation to the nobles that are more influential, I get these members.

Thinking back to those days, it has already been 2 years and it's kind of nostalgic now... Well they haven't changed at all though.

Although they have polished their individual abilities since then, their personality and true nature haven't changed at all.

Even though they've underwent my training, I can't say I hate these people who didn't changed their nature.

"Ah wait a second your highness, I'll come along with you" (*Charles*)

Charles stopped me when I was leaving the room with Zeno.

What does he mean by going together?

"Why don't you guys come along too? I think it would be best to greet our master, Prince Cecil's important person as soon as possible. Besides... if you have someone to congratulate, I think they should be there too..." (*Charles*)

Looking at the smirking Charles, I remembered that although it's quite diluted by now, the duke's house also has the royal blood running on their blood lines.

That's why, He should be attracted to fun things, interesting things, and that interest

him, similar to my personality.

He might say it's because he's my close aide and he could also see his fiancée too... but in reality he's just trying to have fun.

Mostly on seeing my reaction upon meeting Bertia.

I don't really mind, I would also love to see their reactions when meeting Bertia.

"I Don't mind, come to think of it, Nert's childhood friend... countess Silica Runea, Bart's fiancée Cynthia Soneris a daughter of a Margrave enrolled at the same time as Bertia. Maybe they are together at the moment?" *(Cecil)*

Equipped with looks, brain, charisma, money and status, they are famous for doing their social debut early and build their position their

In short, they are young promising lady.

Bertia being the hot topic today, might not be only because of her looks, it might also be because of them being together with Bertia.

"Silica huh... if I don't congratulate her, would she be angry?" *(Nert)*

Hearing lady Silica's name, Nert's expression started to cloud, closed his books and stood up.

That expression might be gloomy, he might have decided that it would be better to go now rather than facing her alone later.

Somehow, the weak willed and unsociable Nert couldn't defy his younger childhood friend.

Never mind his personal skills, since he's so knowledgeable on things, I wish he could have more confidence towards himself.

"Speaking of which lady Silica did attend the enrolment ceremony. I was quite surprised when I noticed she enrolled. Since it's been a long time, I should make my greetings to her." *(Bart)*

Bart... did you forget your fiancée also enrolled this year?

I know your head is filled with martial arts, but this is bad you know?

“Bart... I won't judge you but please remember that lady Cynthia also enrolled today. Women are like marshmallows, if you say things like that, they would get extremely hurt you know?” *(Charles)*

Charles' face twitched as he reminded Bart.

But Bart kept repeating [Marshmallow? Extremely hurt] as if not understanding anything so I told him [Congratulations for enrolling. I'm happy to be able to study at the same place as you. Just tell her that and don't say anything unnecessary understand?]. He happily replied with [I understand, just leave it to me].

Bart is not a bad guy.

If fighting is involved, he would use his wild instinct to bring the situation under control. It can even be said that he's the best among our peers.

He's not double faced and I think he's an interesting guy.

That's why I made him a candidate for my close aides.

...But he's catastrophic when it comes to using his brain.

“Charles, I'll leave it to you alright?” *(Cecil)*

“Are you throwing all responsibility to me?” *(Charles)*

“Since you say you're tagging along, and you're inviting him to go too, it's a given that you follow up on his mistakes” *(Cecil)*

I gave him my best smile and Charles who's having fun until earlier, started twitching his cheeks and heaved a sigh.

“Shaun and Gulgan should come along too, it's better to finish these things in one go.” *(Cecil)*

Gulgan whose working with this has nothing to do with me atmosphere, agreed to follow without objecting once I asked him.

Charles complained about how Gulgan's treatment is different when talking to him but it can't be helped that he's not as popular as me.

"Ah this took more time than I expect, if we don't hurry up we won't make it before the party start at 3 pm" (*Cecil*)

Taking a glance at the time, I hurriedly left the student council room.



"Hey, good afternoon Bertia" (*Cecil*)

I found her as soon as I am able to see the garden.

Being on the position of daughter of the prime minister cum marquis cum the fiancée of the crown prince, she's on a rank that's only below Shaun. As a proof of that, she was able to host the event at the east wings of the garden, one of the best spot in the school and the member of her event also has quite an influence, thus making her event stand out even more.

By the way, on the way here I asked Shaun why did he not host a tea party, but his reason is apparently [It's because I want to see elder brother first that's why my tea party is on 4 pm. ] I have a feeling that it borders bro-con, but I hope it's just my imagination.

Yeah, just leave it as my imagination.

"Y-y-y-your highness!? W-Why are you here? Aren't you supposed to come late? Besides, the other conquerable targe... members of the student council came too?" (*Bertia*)

Because the whole member of the student council is here, in addition of we being conspicuous she quickly noticed us and greeted us in a hurry while being surprised.

...hm? Why is she startled? Aren't we supposed to meet here at this time? I didn't tell her that we're going to be late.

Could it be she's startled because all the members of student council suddenly came?

But I feel that it's not solely because of that.

“You do say amusing things bertia. There’s no way I’ll be late to your enrolment tea party right?”

“no , but...”

Bertia seems confused and her eyes started to wander around.

She opened her mouth and closed her mouth a few times but there’s no word coming out of them. I’m sure she has something she wanted to ask me.

“It’s been a long time, Your Highness Cecil. I am Joanna. Celtswarren. May I have a word with you?” *(Joanna)*

Suddenly the noblewoman beside her spoke to me.

...duchess Joanna Celtswarren.

I’m a bit surprised that she was called to Bertia’s tea party event.

Lady Joanna is my classmate, and it’s also Shaun and my second cousin.

Blessed status, talent, and charisma, and to add up that we’re on the same age, she used to be one of my fiancée candidates.

Because of that, although we haven’t done any marriage meeting, we did met a few times.

But in the end, Bertia became my fiancée and she... now became the one of the fiancée candidate of shaun.

At the end of the day she’s just a [Candidate]. Because shaun is bad with her, there are no further talks of the engagement.

Although political marriage is one of the duty of a royalty, since it’s possible it’s better to announce it when shaun and lady joanna’s relationship became more stable. That’s why now they stopped further arrangement with the pretense of [Period for them to deepen their relationship. ]

Well, the time limit is [until they graduated] though.

“It’s been a long time lady Joanna, I don’t mind please speak” *(Cecil)*

“Then please excuse me. Lady bertia thought that since you’re a busy individual, would not be able to make it to the tea party today and she was quite worried about it earlier. It might be the contradiction of wanting for you to come but also didn’t want you to push yourself. Her restless figure as she looked around for your figure and her surprised figure upon looking at your figure is so cute that...” *(Joanna)*

“Wa, wait a second lady Joanna, what are...” *(Bertia)*

“Your highness, you sure are well loved” *(Joanna)*

Splendidly ignoring the fluttered lady bertia, Hiding her smiling mouth, she looked like she was having fun... Ahh... I can feel that she’s having fun looking at bertia’s reaction as she tease her.

“If that is so, I must have used my luck to became her fiancée” *(Cecil)*

“fufufu... You’re exactly right on that. When I first met her, trying to protect me from the nobles making persistent advances on me, she told them [I have some business with her. Please leave it at there. Don’t you know who I am? I am the future q... q... queen you know! Ce-Cecil hi-highness’s f-f-f-fiancee you know? You have guts to defy me!] with red cheeks and protected me. At the time... lady Bertia is so cute that I might fell for her without noticing.” *(Joanna)*

“S-Such a thing never happened, I elegantly...” *(Bertia)*

“It’s because bertia is very easy to be embarrassed. Although, I didn’t know such a thing happened. Please don’t do anything dangerous alright?” *(Cecil)*

“It’s not dangerous at...” *(Bertia)*

“Your position as my fiancée won’t protect you from everything you know? Especially if a guy is involved then there is chance that it won’t go as planned. When in danger, either find someone who can deal with it or deal with it with numbers” *(Cecil)*

Approaching the fluttered and beet red Bertia, I glanced at her face and pat her head.

Helping someone troubled is a praiseworthy act but if there is danger accompanied with it then I can’t overlook it.

Bertia is straight in both good and bad ways, because of that she's prone to be in danger. That's the reason, I'd like her to take more precaution when I'm not around.

"Eh... but... Im a villainess" (*Bertia*)

"Bertia what's your answer?" (*Cecil*)

"...Okay" (*Bertia*)

Trying to say unbelievable excuse, I put pressure on my gaze and looked at her while smiling... somehow her face turn redder while she's nodding.

Does she really get it?

"Ah but! There's nothing to worry anymore! I, during the 2 years that your highness has enrolled here, have made a friend... I mean henchmen! Have a look at it!" (*Bertia*)

Turning red, she suddenly realized that she has yet introduced the girls that are sitting beside her on the tea party

"I'll introduce you! From my right, duchess Joanna Celtswarren, countess Silica Ruena, marchioness Anne kogares. Anne is a senior from the 2 year, Joanna is on the year as your highness, a 3 year. All of them is the [Rival noblewoman] you know?!" (*Bertia*)

Nnn? Did she just nonchalantly mention something using her previous word's slang?

Furthermore since earlier, she seems keep changing her words from [Friend] to [entourage].

Since there are someone who has the same or higher status than her, isn't it kind of bad to do that?

No other choice, I need to warn her a little.

After greeting with various noblewoman, and introducing my members, I remonstrated her for a little.

"Bertia, since they are [worthy of being your rival] isn't calling them henchman rude? They are your dear friends aren't them?" (*Cecil*)



“No they are not... no ehm... I mean yeah... I’m sorry” (*Bertia*)

Pointed out by me, she tried to refute me. But in the end she noticed that It’d be bad to say it out and honestly nodded to accept.

I think she’d like to refute me like a true villainess would, but from the second where she are being looked with warm gazes by them, it already failed you know?

Rather than trying hard to do impossible things and lower your value, I think it’s better to just give up on doing that.

“Your highness Cecil, we are [lady bertia cherishing society] so in a sense we are lady bertia’s henchmen, please do not mind us” (*Joanna*)

“Bertia cherishing society...? Lady Joanna what in the world is that?” (*Cecil*)

“fufufu... , it’s unofficial so I can’t go into details but just take it as lady Bertia fan’s gathering. They are all either the fan of the book [This is the season! The compilation of capital’s recommended spot!] written by lady Bertia. Or people who fall for her after seeing her trying her best to hide her kindness during the social debut and wanted to look-over her. Or even people who fall for figure when she would cry when things doesn’t work out and still try her best to do it.” (*Joanna*)

“Eh? Wait a second, what is happening lady Joanna?” (*Bertia*)

“Looking at lady bertia heals us up right?” (*Anne*)

“Lady Anne, I’m not such a character...” (*Bertia*)

“The social world is a place where people only cares about their position. There are more and more people who had ulterior motives approaching me. In the midst of that, lady Bertia who’s not honest to herself despite being gentle is so pure that I feel relieved staying around her.” (*Cynthia*)

“Even lady Cynthia too?” (*Bertia*)

“How do I describe it... I just can’t leave her alone. To let this kid grow up this way without getting tainted, I must protect her! Kind of feeling just suddenly came out.” (*Silica*)

“That is already on the view point of a mother right!?Lady Silica, We are the same age right?!” (I guess you don’t need me to tell you who says this.)

Bertia was startled for being told such a thing by someone who’s supposed to be her henchmen. The girls looked like they’re having fun looking at bertia’s figure.

Despite having learned etiquette, she would often screw up on these social event. These brilliant and famous noblewoman started to became her ally... or should I say guardian.

In addition, they became such unconsciously.

“moumoumou! Everyone takes their jokes too far!! Please don’t tease me!” (*Bertia*)

Bertia, let’s try to notice that when they start to tease you, it already stopped being a [joke].

“Rather than that! Your highness, on your way here did you see a cute girl playing with a white bird?” (*Bertia*)

Smiling wryly to her that’s forcibly trying to change the topic, I tried to think about what she’s saying

Come to think of it, certainly when coming here, I can see a girl student chasing a white bird on a lawn while smiling and saying [Wait~].

“Hmmmm is it that girl? I saw a female student Whilst chasing a white bird, she would laugh in a high pitch sound like a drug addict. Sometimes she would do shady things like glancing at me and suddenly started talking to the bird. But since I’m almost late to bertia’s tea party, I only asked Gulgan to inform the teacher and came here right after. Is there any problem?” (*Cecil*)

“D-drug addict!? Don’t you feel attracted or interested to her?” (*Bertia*)

“I do think that she’s a weird one, and quite dangerous and that. But compared to a girl playing with a bird, a girl who is using a black fox as a scarf is more interesting.” (*Cecil*)

“H-heroine... m-meeting event is...” (*Bertia*)

Finishing my introduction, sitting at the seat prepared right beside her, I can hear her murmuring something with a panic expression.

In reality she would like to hug her head, although since she's concerned about the surrounding people, she could only hide her face with a fan and try to hold it.

"Oh yeah! The rose! What happened to the rose?" *(Bertia)*

"As per requested, I prepared it for your congratulatory gift... Zeno" *(Cecil)*

Calling out to Zeno who's standing behind me like my shadow, he immediately handed her the rose.

By the way Kuro the spirit like Zeno is standing behind Bertia... mimicking as her maid.

A bishojo around the age of 10 with no expression and black hair.

Wearing a weirdly voluminous frilly dress around knee length, around her head stood 2 fox ear... I have a feeling that I'd lose a lot of things if I touch it.

Probably those who are not talented in seeing spirit wouldn't be able to see her ears..... even you can see, you could feel the no touch aura lingering.

"Bertia, congratulations for enrolling. I'm happy that there are more chance to meet you now." *(Cecil)*

"Thank you very much your highness..... Wait why is it a potted plant!? Furthermore, Isn't the blue rose is a legendary class item!!" *(Bertia)*

Taking my roses by reflex, once she confirmed the flower on her hands, she nearly drop it because of the shock.

I did pluck out all the thorn, and since I also wrapped it up there is low chance of getting hurt, but it doesn't change that it's dangerous.

"Hey Bertia, hold it carefully. This rose is not natural grown but cultivated by me using a few techniques. As a legendary class item, it might not worth much, but for those who researched to get this color, it is a source of wealth if mass-produced and sold." *(Cecil)*

“Just what kind of thing did you made this time” *(Bertia)*

“Since Bertia like the color, I tried to match the rose to your liking. By the way since I only made this for you, this is a one of a kind item. Don’t drop it or let it wither down alright? Even if you asked for a new one, I couldn’t make it easily.” *(Cecil)*

“Somehow, I felt my responsibility is huge...” *(Bertia)*

“Nah, because you own it now, you can do as you like. It’s just that I tried to made it to match your favorite color. If you don’t like it feel free to throw it away.” *(Cecil)*

“...” *(Bertia)*

oh? Seems like bertia’s body went rigid as she hugs the pot.

The other’s who’s enjoying the tea party whilst looking at our situation, somehow all of their faces looks strained at the moment... Recently my surrounding would make those kind of faces, so I don’t really mind it though.

Bertia herself also came to her sense and murmured [The opponent is that android price you know, if you started to care about it you’ll lose]

“...Ahem. Please excuse my rudeness. By the way your highness, beside this rose, did you bring a normal red roses bouquet and whilst coming here gave it to the girl playing with the white bird?” *(Bertia)*

“The one that I prepared for your gift is only this. I feel that a normal roses wouldn’t be enough when I made it, do you prefer that one instead?” *(Cecil)*

I tried to match it with bertia’s favorite color, was it a mistake? I think it was a very beautiful blue color. On top of that it’s a bit dark... like your highness’s eye... No I didn’t mean that! I mean I like it because it’s a really beautiful color.” *(Bertia)*

As I expect, she liked that color because it’s my color.

On top of unable to falsify it, her face also started to turn red.

I really think that this is her unique trait.

...Bertia really made me feel entertained.

“Your highness, then did you give the rose to the white bird girl?” (*Bertia*)

“I think that it’s a given that I wouldn’t give a present meant for you to a passing by weird girl right?” (*Cecil*)

“Of course huh...” (*Bertia*)

Bertia started to stare at the rose pot in her hand.

Even if you stare at it, you won’t find any trace of a stem being pulled out... Thinking that, her face started to change gradually. First it’s a face of being troubled, Then her face started to warm up like a flower starting to bud. Finally her face brighten up like a rose blooming perfectly.

“...Well since it’s already a done matter, just for this moment, it’s alright to feel happy right?” (*Bertia*)

She said it with a small voice, not to be heard by anyone else. Hearing that it gave my body started a weird feeling and my chest tightened up.

After that, the tea party ended. From the story I heard as I sent her back to her dorm, today on the way to bertia’s party, I was supposed to notice the heroine and started to have interest in her. From the banquet of roses that I’m supposed to send bertia, I’ll pluck one out and gave it to her and the [Meeting event] should occur then.

She did complain about me totally her... but just think about it, it can’t be helped that I have more interest in a girl using a black fox as a scarf rather than a girl playing with a white bird.

In addition, I am already satisfied to be able to see lady Bertia’s face and her interesting reaction, and the slight reaction of the member of student council.

# Chapter 7

## Bertia (14 years old)[1]

In one of the salon shared between high school and middle school division.

Called as the special room, it's a place where a small amount of people are able to gather and socialize together. There, Bertia and I had our lunch 3 months after my graduation from middle school division.

"So, your highness, how is your relationship with the heroine? I haven't hear any information on both of you [getting along] together." (*Bertia*)

While chatting and drinking our tea after we had our dessert, Bertia suddenly stared at me.

"Hmm? Heroine? Aah, the bird girl. How do I describe it, our relationship haven't even reached the level of introducing our names to each other. I don't even know her name. If I have to describe our relationship, she would be a suspicious person that I usually met." (*Cecil*)

The bird girl — the daughter of baron Inderon, Heronia. Inderon

Since Bertia would keep yapping about Heroine, and someone who I would seldom meet, I did some investigation on her.

That's why, honestly I knew more than just her name.

I also know that Bertia who would usually interact with me and my close aides, would sometimes unintentionally called the over familiar suspicious girl who always came and talk to us – baroness Heronia, [heroine] in a public place. And since then her hidden second name had become [heroine].

Different from the meaning that Bertia had when she called her [heroine], the people around called her [heroine] just to shorten her name. because her name is [hero]-nia. [in]deron.

To Bertia, it must be a silver lining to a dark cloud.

Well because of that although I do know about, Barronness Heronia commonly known as [heroine], there are a lot of social rules preventing me from saying so.

Even if I do know about her, if we haven't been introduced by someone, or haven't made our greetings, we have to act as if we're [Strangers].

Talking about her with other people may be fine but, no matter how often we met each other, or how often did we have small chat, it's the manners to not interact with her as if we're [acquaintance] or not calling each other with names.

That's why even now, [heroine] and I are still [strangers]

...Although I don't know whether she understand this.

"H-How could this be?! Even after I had guided you to all those event spots. After meeting for year, why are you still on the level of unacquainted?!" "Hmm? [guided] you say? As expected all of that is not a coincidence huh?"

During the time between Bertia's enrollments to the middle school division, until I have graduated from the middle school, there are a lot of time where I'm called by Bertia and met baroness Heronia there.

Since its Bertia, I thought that she would ask me out to a place where I'm more likely meet baroness heronia, the [heroine].

In truth, it's a favor from my cute fiancée so I don't really mind to actually be [acquainted] with her.

After we're [acquainted] I just need to ignore her as I see fit while keeping our distance and it shouldn't be a problem.

But, I do feel that situation won't be so interesting. Thus in the end, everytime I heard baroness heronia's voice or see her figure, I would smile and leave the place immediately.

"That- that's because I wanted your highness to be happy! That's also for the sake of the citizens in this world!! But because I'm a villainess, I can't directly meditate between your highness and the heroine. That's why I thought, at least I would help

you by making the event start normally.” (*Bertia*)

Noticing my smile has a certain pressure at it, she tried her best to make an excuse.

Although, as her fiancé, that’s nothing but meddlesome matters.

The only merit, would be that seeing her figure of doing (*futile*) effort is sometimes (*interesting*) cute.

While baroness Heronia is quite a stalwart and interesting person, she’s not as interesting as Bertia so I don’t really admire her... Recently there’s even a part of me thought of her as a little bit troublesome.

In the first place, it troubles me when I didn’t give her any roses she told [Your highness, thank you for the beautiful roses that you sent me earlier. I was so happy that I display it nearby my windows]. Furthermore, although we didn’t have any interaction before, she would tell me about her bird—the light spirit and say [Pi-chan isn’t easily attracted to people, but your highness seems different. She must like me being together with your highness]

.....At the time, hearing her story the bird-like spirit hurriedly wanted to make it a fait accompli and rushes to me in a great momentum, I was perplexed and I almost reflexively smashed that bird.

I immediately calmed down and dodged half a step to avoid it, in the end the bird-like thing couldn’t stop in time and crashed into the wall. After that it couldn’t fly straight for a while but that wasn’t really my fault.

I only dodged it by half a step.

It’s that baroness Heronia and bird like thing that asked for it.

That’s why when she screamed behind me [No, don’t mind it and you also don’t need to apologize. Ah, but I have some problem with my studies, and I would be happy if you could teach me later], I just ignored her and leave the place.

In the first place, if that thing really crashed into me, there is a chance that I might get hurt, thus dodging it as self-defense would be a given.

Our not interaction like interaction usually has that kind of feeling.



I think that her speech actually does match Bertia's past life story and it might be interesting to observe her for a while but at the moment I don't have a speck of interest on her.

In the first place, most of the time her speech pattern is following a script and it's not really interesting that way.

It's like an ad-libbing show that has a lot of interesting actor on it, and there's this new guy who act following the script and couldn't follow the flow of the stage.

Well if she's just forcibly following the [scenario] in the [otome game] that bertia always talked about. That's exactly what she's doing isn't it?

But I don't really care about that and I don't have any interest in it.

"Ac-actually I did ask Joanna-sama and the others to introduce Heronia-sama to your highness. But they would always refuse me by saying [Bertia-sama, that kind of kindness can hurt people you know?] or [There's nothing worst than getting helped by the partner of your illicit loves. ]" *(Bertia)*

I'm sure because they don't know what's Bertia true motive, they thought that she was pitying baroness Heronia for having illicit love on me and would like for her to have a little bit of sweet memories in doing so and misunderstand her favor as an act of kindness.

Then, I'm sure Bertia who's downhearted and tilting her head right now as she tried to mimic Joanna-jyou's speech, didn't understand anything that they're trying to tell her.

"Bertia, I have my own reasons for keeping my distance with baroness Heronia. That's why, you don't need to try so hard and just look over me okay?" *(Cecil)*

"Your highness, did you did that because there's some complex reason in it? Of course it is, your highness wouldn't just let an adorable princess leave just like that. I'm sure there's some kind of strategy in it. ]" *(Bertia)*

"Of course. I won't just *(overlook)* leave a *(stupidly)* cute princess just like that. I'm trying my best everyday you know?"

I half-heartedly told that to the troubled bertia. She seemed to leak out a she get it

aura, so I think that she splendidly misunderstand it.

I don't even need to say that I just left the misunderstanding as it is here.

Taking my distance is mainly because [ It seems troublesome, and I don't want to be close to a suspicious person. Besides, I don't want to shorten my time on observing Bertia] and it's a valid [reason]. Besides, in my case, [(stupidly) cute princess] refers to Bertia and I actually don't want to (*overlook*) leave (any interesting thing that she does) alone.

See, even if I didn't clear the misunderstanding, I didn't tell any lies on her right?

Ah come to think of it, I remembered that [I won't overlook any of Bertia's interesting action]

I have something I need to tell her.

"Come to think of it Bertia, recently my friend always talked about you" (*Cecil*)

"Hmm? About me? What kind of thing did they talk about? I have no recollection of doing anything" (*Bertia*)

"...ummm, I think it's because there are a lot of things happening recently. Even last year there's a lot of happenings too" (*Cecil*)

I smile wryly when I looked at Bertia tilting her head having no idea what had happened.

"You, starting from last year, started to put some effort on interacting with my friends right?" (*Cecil*)

"Ah, about that. I did my best to prevent the reverse harem and their conquering routes." (*Bertia*)

Finally noticing what I was talking about, her expression brighten and held her chest up as if I'm complimenting her.

...Didn't you know how much my close aides complained because of you?



On last year's summer.

Charles was having a red face with tears on his eyes while complaining about it to me about Bertia, who god knows where got ahold of the information that Charles was having a hidden crush on his brother's first fiancée candidate Anne-jyou, and had told her about it.

"It's not a laughing matter to have an admiration for my elder brother's fiancée! It shouldn't be known to anyone! I tried my best to quickly forget about my feelings and this is the outcome?! Your highness, Bertia-sama is your fiancé right? Do something about her!! Before the feelings that I held deep down in my heart burst out!"

Looking at the usually cool Charles opening the door in great momentum and desperately pleaded to me in a hurry, I unintentionally smiled wryly.

By the way, Charles himself didn't notice it but in the opposite of the opened door, Bertia and the red faced Anne-jyou who are chasing after him is standing there.

Probably, since his love got exposed, Charles who started to panic ran away immediately without saying anything and feeling concerned about him, the two followed him here.

Trying to see when will he notice the presence of both of them, without noticing, Charles who started to get excited while pleading, started to talk about her love with Anne-jyou while crying. Having lost the timing to stop him, we could only listen to his heated confession.

"I fell in love at the first sight I met her." (*Charles*)

"Just by listening to her voice, my heart... and my body started to heat up. But given her standing I can't do anything about her. I mean isn't it a given? She is the fiancée candidate for my elder brother. From her perspective, It's better to marry my elder brother than me, the second son of a duke that can't inherit its position. And after having that thought, it's even harder for me to act."

"It's started to become unbearably hard when I think about her, thus to forget her even a single day earlier, I started to go out with various women but to no avail. For some reason her figure just keep popping out in my mind. I painfully know that there is no

replacement for her and even so, I repeating that thinking that one day I will forget about her.” *(Charles)*

“I loved her deeply, But as my loves grow deeper, my hate also grows. I mean think about it! Having stolen my heart until this degree, she was destined to be wed with my elder brother. Thinking that from now on, I need to look at the figure of her that had become my brother’s make me feel that my heart is ripping apart.”

The over-heated confession to her loved one who’s not here (at least he himself think so).

About charles’s love, I do have a slight inkling from how Charles looked at Anne-jyou, his reaction when meeting her, his blinking speed that increases to about 1. 2 times, his slightly rising body temperature, his 0. 01 second reaction to stop himself from being excited. But I didn’t know that it was to this degree.

I think no one noticed that, the womanizer Charles would be so devoted to a single person until this degree.

Until hearing the word directly from Charles now, even Anne-jyou herself didn’t notice it at all

I think noticing it would be harder since Charles is usually good at hiding his own emotion.

In the end, receiving charles’ heated emotion, I don’t know if it’s because of Anne-jyou’s face that flushed until the explosion point, or just wanting to hear it directly from Charles’ but at this moment, bertia suddenly shouted and closed the curtain of charles’ love confession.

“What an unsightly figure, Charles-sama!! If you’re so obsessed with her, why didn’t you try to steal her from your brother?! Can you call yourself as a conquerable target with that!?” *(Bertia)*

“It’s because I can’t give her happiness more than my brother!! Even if my home has a few more titles other than a duke and you could somehow live as a noble with it, that in the end is an inferior version of being a [duchess] and the value in that is……. A-A-A-Anne-jyou?!!” *(Charles)*

Charles who keep looking at me turned back to retort when hearing bertia’s voice.

Finally he noticed anne-jyou's presence there.

With eyes that looked like he has seen ghost, Charles started to open his mouth like a goldfish... Even I feel sorry for him.

"There you should tell her that [Even with that I will make you happy! Please choose me as your partner]!! Certainly, to live a life you would need to have a certain amount of wealth. But just with that, she wouldn't be happy! In a world where political marriage is a given it's even more so that she seeks for love. When a person who sincerely loves us trying our hearts from other gentleman, there is nothing more fabulous than that. To ladies that kind of this is a kind of moe... I mean Admiration!! If we're able to live our life with someone who think about us this much, I think we would still be happy even if we were to lose our position!" *(Bertia)*

Holding his both hand, Bertia tried to convince him.

But, haven't recovered from the lethal damage, Charles didn't have any reaction to it.

"From then on, whether we could be happy depends on the value of the man! From then on it depends on you on how much are you willing to commit and how much love are you going to give to make us happy. I admit that trying to steal your elder brother's fiancée is no simple matters. But Since its still a [Candidate] fiancée the chances is not that slim you know?! From the rumors, Charles-sama's elder brother is quite a womanizer unlike the fake womanizer you. And Anne-sama is quite troubled with it. Won't you feel regret if your beloved Anne-sama got stolen by that kind of person? I don't want you to feel regret and become even more of a womanizer than you are now. When Anne-sama finally became your elder brother's fiancée and couldn't feel happiness because of the political meeting, I also don't want to you heave a sigh murmuring [I don't have any right to console her when I didn't even fight for her happiness] while biting your lips and with eyes that looked at a distant photo... scene." *(Bertia)*

Bertia did you say [photo] earlier?

That is undoubtedly something from your past life right?

"If you want to act, now is the time! Even Anne-sama prefers to be married to someone who truly loves herself rather than marrying a gentleman who doesn't love her even if that means becoming a duchess."

“Huh? umm? yeah?” *(Anne)*

Anne-jyou nodded when the talk suddenly pushed to her.

Ah... Charles eye's that has become hollow like a bottomless abyss had light returning to them.

“Is that true Anne-jyou” *(Charles)*

“Eh? I mean...” *(Anne)*

Receiving both of Charles and Bertia's gazes that are full of expectation, the beet red Anne-jyou started wander her eyes around.

Even though she is troubled, she couldn't outright deny it since Charles is looking at her with a pleading eyes. Furthermore, what Bertia said is not totally off the mark too.

While thinking about that and enjoying the scene in front of me, my eye unintentionally met with Anne-jyou's.

I could only smile wryly to her eyes that are looking for help.

After all this absurd situation is brought by my fiancée Bertia.

Maybe I should do a little follow up.

“Both of you, stop asking a maiden with such an attitude. Look, Anne-jyou looked like a ripe apple because of that.” *(Cecil)*

To my words, Bertia seemed unsatisfied but Charles seemed to have noticed it and apologized to Anne-jyou.

“Ah, by the way Charles, it's true that social standings are important but being my, the future king's close aides you should get a social standing close to it.” *(Cecil)*

“Oh that's true! Just as what your highness said, Even if you can't succeed the duke position and became an earl, by being the king's close aides, you will gain a suitable social standing. I'm pretty sure that Anne-jyou's family won't have any complain.”

“No, but I don't even know if I would be able to become the king's close aides”

*(Charles)*

“What are you even saying?! Isn’t that depends on how hard you work for it? Isn’t that right your highness?” *(Bertia)*

“That is right. Since I liked talented people, in that point, Charles is already a suitable candidate. What’s left how hard you work for it. Both on being my close aides, and the right to marry Anne-jyou.” *(Cecil)*

When I show them my smile, Charles’ eyes went wide open.

“Hm but first you would need to confess your love to Anne-jyou and start doing your best so that you can be useful to me. If I saw potential in you, I might even lend you my help” *(Cecil)*

Charles nodded while staring at me.

From now on, it’s up to his resolve and hard work.

Noticing my intention, the usual frivolous Charles changed. His eyes now bring a strong resolve in it now.

“Anne-jyou, I have always admired you. You’re like a high class flower and I gave up knowing that there is no way I could possess you. But if there is a slight possibility of doing so then i will bet on it. I want to be someone that could possess you. No I will become it. That is why, could you look over me?”

Charles who knelt in front of Anne-jyou has not a single doubt on his eyes.

Realizing that Charles is sincere about it, even though she is troubled, making her resolve, she put her hands on top of Charles’ hand.

“I am a daughter of a noble, I’m not as ignorant as not to understand the meaning of political marriage. But If it is possible, then I would like to live happily by marrying someone whom I love and loved back in return like what Bertia-sama said. Although I still don’t understand what’s like and love, I’m very happy about Charles-sama’s feelings toward me. That’s why, if you would like to work hard for my sake, then I will carefully think about my future from now on. Is this kind on answer acceptable...?”  
*(Anne)*

Anne-jyou looked uneasy.

In contrast to that, like seeing a glimpse of light in the world without hope, Charles smiled happily even more so than before.

“Of course, just by hearing that answer, I think I can even become a subordinate of a demon king.” (*Charles*)

...[demon king] isn't referring to me right Charles?

Looking over both of them with a smile on my face, I noticed Charles suddenly shivered for a while. He must be too happy that his body started to shake.

Well thanks to such a thing happening, Charles are able to confess his love to his beloved princess, and I made a best friend (close aides candidate) that are hardworking more than ever. It's a result that made everyone happy.

After that Charles who sometimes got leaf around the nose by Bertia would come and complain to me. I would always ignore him unless it's really interesting though.

By the way Bertia would say [I'm 'A love cupid'. It feels great after doing a good deed] in regards to her own action on that day.

...What is a [love cupid]? Even now I still don't get it.



Nert's case is the opposite of Charles. Silica-jyou, Nert's childhood friend and Bertia's friend is being led by then nose by Bertia. Nert's greatly surprised by that.

Silica-jyou is the type of person who's uptight and is good at taking care of people.

That being the reason, that is exactly why that she couldn't leave Nert –who's knowledgable but not sociable who's always shutting himself in his room– alone.

She would always pay attention to Nert's action and took care of him.

“Nert-sama, don't just read your book, try to chat with your friends. If you don't do so you'll be left out by your friends again.”



“Wait a second, Nert-sama! Don’t read your book while eating! Look, because you’re not looking at what you’re eating, you’re making a mess. Really you’re such a sloven person.” *(Silica)*

“You didn’t finish your vegetables again! If you keep doing that you won’t grow any bigger you know? You’re not a kid anymore, finish all of your food” *(Silica)*

“Why’s there black rings under your eyes? Did you stay up late again? How unhealthy! And do go out of your home sometime! If you keep staying home you’ll grow mold you know?” *(Silica)*

There’s just no end to the examples. She just keep taking care of Nert.

On the other hand, since her words have that kind of strict tone on it would always thought of her attention as [getting scolded] or [made her angry again] and would always apologize to her every time it happens.

But, that kind of things keep happening since once he started to concentrate, he has the disposition to not notice his surroundings.

From my point of view, His action of closing himself in his own world is fine as long as he didn’t trouble anyone and should just be left alone.

Although, it seems impossible for her who always pay attention to Nert.

The same kind of conversation would just keep repeating between both of them.

On a summer day where such daily occurrence happens.

Nert who’s getting irritated because of the hot weather, finally lost it to Silica who advised him as always.

“Ah, mou, I don’t like it because silica is scary!! Since you’re always angry at me, then don’t come near me!! It’s better for both of us that way.” *(Nert)*

Silica-jyou is shocked as Nert unusually retorted back.

It’s a facial expression that just spells that she is shocked.

But without noticing it, Nert just keeps on retorting.

“In the first place, who are you to me? You’re just my childhood friends so don’t meddle in my affairs! Seriously it’s annoying! That’s precisely why there is no one who’s willing to marry you.” *(Nert)*

I don’t know why nert snapped at that time.

Maybe it’s just the combination of him having a bad temper on that day, and because of the continuous sleepless night, and he just received a letter full of naggings from his father count Kram, and the weather is just very hot on that day.

But if I have to say a thing, no matter how you think of it, Nert’s retort is just over the line at that time.

Anne-jyou was rendered speechless while grasping the hem of her shirt. She bit her molars and tears started to fall from her eyes.

Seeing that scene at that moment..... Bertia snapped.

“Can you cut that out? What’s with you blaming silica-jyou for you yourself being such a sloven person? Who do you think you are?” *(Bertia)*

The unmaidenly like voice that suddenly sprung out froze everyone – the member of the student council.

“Maybe there are some part in Silica-jyou’s talk that are a little bit harsh. But she is an unbelievably gentle person you know? Especially towards Nert-sama. Her dedication towards you is at the point where me and my friends are just left speechless. Even that why would you not understand that in spite of that she’s telling all of those because of how gentle she is and how much she love you” *(Bertia)*

“Dedication? Gentle? Love?” *(Nert)*

“Be-Bertia –sama! What are you talking about! That’s not it! I told you that’s totally not because of that!” *(Silica)*

“Silica-sama, at this moment it’s better for you to tell him straight to the point! Otherwise, at some point he will only think that your dedication and love is just some needless begging and he would be stolen by some nobodies because of her sweet talks to him!” *(Bertia)*

“P-Please stop this!!” (*Silica*)

“What do you mean...?” (*Nert*)

“Nert-sama, It is true that Silica-jyou paid a lot of attention to you. But, all of the thing she done is for your own good you know? She may say things a little bit harsh. But in truth even though she’s nagging all that time that she’s the one who tidied all of the mess that you made when you’re eating, stopped you when it seems like you’re going to dirty your treasured book, and gave you handkerchief to wipe your hands when you are going to touch those books. When your body is unwell because of the continuous sleepless night, she’s the one who made all those nutritious food and gave you tea that has a relaxing effect. And who do you think covered you up with a blanket when you fell asleep when reading those books?! Even the vegetables inside of the cookies that you ate earlier was made by her to make you who’s a vegetable hater to eat a little bit of vegetables. It is the fruit of labor from her relentless research you know? If she did all of those not because of love then what is it for? Do you think a normal childhood friend would do so much for you?” (*Bertia*)

“That is not true!! That is just a part of my personality so... Anyways none of that is true!!” (*Silica*)

“...” (*Nert*)

The beet-red anne-jyou frantically tried to prevent Bertia from saying any further.

Meanwhile Nert is deep in thought as if to notice something because of what Bertia said and how perplexed Silica was.

Then from the third person point of view, Charles with a distant look on his face said [Un, Un I know that kind of feeling] while nodding his head.

...Isn’t it great Charles? It seems like you have made a companion. Do you want to try making a bertia’s victim club?

“I know that silica is a gentle and caring person. She would always guide me when I’m get lost. She also helped me when I’m troubled and will try to warn me when I forgot my surroundings. But all of those pales in comparison to what she does for you.” (*Bertia*)

Bertia that [get Lost] is not a metaphor but it’s an actual [lost child] right?

I know that silica would always help bertia out when she's lost on her way to her next classroom.

It's burdensome right when there is a limited time and place where you could take your maids or follower around in school.

It's even more so for you who realized that you have no sense of direction after enrolling to the school.

Ah aren't Cynthia-jyou and Silica-jyou are always by your side to prevent you from getting lost? Isn't it great that you made such a reliable friend.

Oh yeah isn't there a time where you saw baroness heronia and you started to run without minding your surroundings and got stopped by Silica-jyou who caught your arm? I remember you got dragged into an empty classroom to be educated on how to behave as a maiden for an hour after that.

It's just something I heard from my [Envoy] though.

"Such a thing is not true! I treat everyone as an equal! I didn't give special treatment to Nert-sama!" *(Silica)*

Nnn? Why is it though? The more she denies it, the deeper she fell into the pit.

See, the surroundings started to give them warm gazes, even Nert looks like he noticed something and his face started to turn red.

"Silica... Sorry, I didn't notice it at all" *(Nert)*

"Ohh!! Finally you understand her feeling! That's great! I'm happy for you Silica-jyou! Your feelings got through at last" *(Bertia)*

Closing his own mouth, Nert apologizes while averting his eyes. Bertia on the other hand looked very content and laughed merrily.

Although...

"BE-RT-IA SAMA!! Make your resolve now! I won't let you off the hook easily!!" *(Silica)*

"Si-Silica-sama? Why are you angry..." *(Bertia)*

Finally understanding what kind of situation she's in now, Bertia's face started to cramp up.

Nevertheless, it seems she still couldn't understand why Silica-jyou was so angry at her.

It's just that she could sense that she's in danger from Silica-jyou's anger. She looked around immediately looking for help, at the end her eyes met mine.

Yeah, she reap what she sow.

That's why, go and get yourself scolded okay?

Bertia who tried to approach when she saw my meaningless nod, was caught brilliantly on the first step by Silica-jyou.

"Yo-Your Highneesss" (*Bertia*)

"Your Highness Cecil, may I borrow Bertia-sama for a while?" (*Silica*)

In a tone that didn't allow any refusal, Silica jyou asked for my permission.

"Well, Bertia is in the wrong this time... so I don't mind if it's only for about 2 hours."  
(*Cecil*)

Although Bertia is my fiancée, she still are free to do what she wants. If there isn't any special occasions, there is no need for her to ask for my permission... Of course I'll still answer her if I'm asked though.

By the way, the 2 hour time limit isn't because I have a particular business with Bertia. It's simply because I wanted it to be [left it at about there] and some basic pity on her.

I can hear the surroundings saying [Isn't 2 hours too long?], but I don't think it is.

"Having that much is enough. I will thoroughly educate Bertia-sama on maiden's heart with my all" (*Silica*)

To the smiling Silica-jyou, although not as bad as Nert or Bertia, I do feel afraid.

Women—Maiden's wrath are not something to be sought.

“Your highness, save me...” *(Bertia)*

“Bertia, It’s just your bridal training... probably” *(Cecil)*

“That’s not...” *(Bertia)*

“Ah, since you’re my wife, I guess I should call it queen training instead” *(Cecil)*

“I also thing that’s not right!” *(Bertia)*

“Do properly apologize to her, and make up with your best friend okay?” *(Cecil)*

“.....”

Even when tears started to came out from her eyes, Bertia is stayed silent.

To Bertia, Silica-jyou is her irreplaceable best friend. I’m sure she doesn’t want her best friend to stay angry and have a quarrel with her.

The clinging eyes that she sent to me slowly went to silica-jyou’s who grabbed her hand.

To Bertia who’s looking at her with upturned eye, Silica-jyou smiled.

For a second, I can see the hallucination of a blizzard.

“...if you make sure to listen to what she say, and properly apologize, I think she will forgive you” *(Cecil)*

A small critter is quivering there.

Bertia is like a small critter who’s anxiously quivering while begging forgiveness to it’s master now. Honestly it’s interesting and cute.

“It depends on how sincere Bertia-sama is” *(Silica)*

Silica who was embarrassed and showed her back to Bertia. Bertia hasn’t realized it yet but Silica-jyou’s gazes started to warm up while having[ [there’s no helping with this kid] exasperated feeling on it.

Originally, Silica-jyou's standing are lower than Bertia's, thus there is no need to ask for her forgiveness.

If she would just use her social standing and ordered her to [Forgive her] then with silica-jyou's standing she couldn't refuse her.

But Bertia won't do that.

Far from doing that, she's trying to ask forgiveness as a friend. By doing that, she could more or less lessen her anger.

"...T-then, Ne-nerchu-sama, a-about this talk, w-we'll continue this someday. I need to have a tyalk wich Bertia-sama, so I'll excuse myself here. Goodbye everyone!" (*Silica*)

Silica-jyou gave the impression to have pulled herself together, hold bertia's arm and left the place.

...But her face is beet red... and she stuttered earlier right?

It's plain in sight that she hasn't recovered from her agiation.

Even Nert's heart jumped a bit.

Regardless of that, peace returned to the student council room after bertia and Silica-jyou left the place

It seems silica-jyou's lecture after that did went on for about 2 hours.

I don't know in what kind of way was bertia scolded, but after that Bertia would be extremely scared of Silica-jyou. During the tea party, that dessert lover Bertia would even offer her favorite dessert to her with tears on her face. Not mentioning when offering bertia would murmur [Maiden's heart is delicate], [people would hate you if you're inconsiderate] or [When given the signal I need to shut up. ]. After that, She stopped revealing people's crush to the people concerned or would look at Silica-jyou when she say something that are in the gray area. I think she's really scared of her now.

## Chapter 8

### Bertia (14 years old)[2]

Maybe its because of Silica-jyou's guidance, after that Bertia's rampage had been contained somewhat. Although it didn't completely dissapear.

One time, she dragged Cynthia-jyou to the student council room and suddenly requested Bard to teach them horse-riding.

As Bard is usually like the kind older brother who didn't really mind things, he didn't think further and accepted her request. Although I fear everything is an [Event] to help bard to take Cynthia-jyou to his arms.

In the end, for some reason I got dragged into all of these and ended up taking his guidance. At that time, I noticed that Cynthia-jyou had already mastered horse riding and there is nothing more to teach her.

"Eh? Wasn't Cynthia-sama supposed to be frail because of the disease that's spread throughout the capital? Because of that you didn't exercise much and shut yourself inside your mansion, living your life reading books everyday? That's the setting... I mean rumor that I've heard about you."

Bertia was tilting her head Cynthia-jyou who, instead of using the side saddle used by girls to ride a horse, gallantly rode on the back of the horse while having fun.

"Ara?I didn't know where you hear such a thing but as far as I've lived I had never gotten ill to such a state. Even though I liked reading books, I loved horse riding just as much. I even rode around my territory with my horse sometimes."

To Cynthia-jyou's answer, Bertia is confusingly tilting her head.

Why did she even overlook such a basic things, I thought. I approached her and whispered to her ears.

"Bertia, did you forgot that the plague that hit the capital few years ago was contained in no time and there's almost no causalities?" *(Cecil)*



“Ahhhhh... I TOTALLY FORGOT ABOUT THAT!”

Finally understanding the situation, Bertia screamed suddenly and started holding her head.

In the end, instead of practicing horse riding, we went and traveled horseback.

Recognizing each other's skill, Bard and Cynthia-jyou started to have a race in no time. It's a speed where Bertia who only learned how to ride a horse in a side saddle couldn't catch up. So it ended up as Bertia riding together with me in order to catch up to them.

To the unusual speed, Bertia was scared and starting to had tears on the end of her eyes and hold me tightly. It was interesting so I made a little prank like rising the speed even more and held her in an unstable way.

Then, one time, to get over Shaun's bad feelings with Joanna-jyou, she created a plan to make a hand make cookies executed it.

In regards to that matter, In addition to the fact that Joanna-jyou is Shaun's political marriage partner, since she liked Shaun, she went along Bertia's plan.

To be exact, I think half of her reason was because of her maiden like heart who wishes to gift Shaun something, the other half is because Bertia's plan seemed interesting.

With this and that, they went to execute the self made cake plan.

Let's talk about the result first.

Joanna-jyou who's basically good in everything, is just clueless on making cookies.

Being a sore loser, she tried to challenge a lot of things but in the end, all of them failed.

Either it's burned like a charcoal, having good looking cookies but hard as stone, or places that needed to be hard is soft somehow.

The taste also varies from being too sweet, salty, or sour. no matter what you just couldn't think of the thing as delicious.

The cookies that Joanna-jyou made, made everyone noblewoman guiding her, including the great cook Silica-jyou, tilt their head in confusion on the mysterious

object created by her.

Even if it's on the not very tasty but still edible, upon giving it to Shaun, of course his response would be quite lacking.

Looking at his figure, Joanna-jyou looked a little bit downhearted... but I think that's good in a sense.

She who's confident and is perfect at everything, made Shaun a little uneasy with her. Looking her like this, he started to think that in the end she is just a normal girl.

The miss perfect Joanna-jyou, felt really downhearted because she [can't do it]. Trying to console her, Shaun started to loosen up to her and even his feeling to protect her starts to bud.

At the end when she regained her spirits, [Ah, so Your highness, Shaun wanted to feel being depended on sometimes] and she started to understand the trick to handle him. At times she would periodically depend on him, or act depressed in front of him. By doing that, Shaun started to gain confidence as a man and started to recognize her as [someone to protect and support].

Even if it's initially an act by Joanna-jyou to make Shaun care for her, without noticing it, Joanna-jyou who's comforted because of Shaun started to exude a calmed down, dignified feeling.

That's why even if the plan is a failure, the result is alright.

By the way Bertia's reaction to that is [ It's just as I intended it to be!]. Although she sounded haughty, she didn't really do anything and she said that while averting her eyes.



The year passed by with all of those happenings, and we the third years graduated the middle school in spring without any trouble.

Then in exchange for us who went into first year of high school, the student council is succeeded by the former second year, Kulder and Anne-jyou.

Being a second years, the days passed normally since Bertia's lifestyle doesn't change

that much.

That is fine. That is fine but... coming here personally, I'm unsatisfied with something.

[Unsatisfied]

Yeah. I think this feeling is called [unsatisfied] or [irritated].

Usually, I don't get swayed much by my own feeling. So rarely having this much negative feeling on me, I think I certainly are feeling something akin to [anger] at the moment.

because...

"Hey, Bertia? Ever since we entered high school, although I always heard about your stuff from my friends, I have a feeling that I rarely see you despite of that. Why is it?"

Taking the second serving of the tea into my mouth, I smiled when asking Bertia who's trying to take the snacks into her mouth while tilting her head.

Then, acting as she's thinking, she exclaimed [I just realised now that you say it] and nodded energetically as if she just realized it now

"Since your highness' conquering event mainly occurs on the first year of middle school, after you went to high school there is rarely such an event. That's the reason why your conquering difficulty is at max, and was even said to be un-breachable. In contrast, the conquering event for Kulgan-sama is at its most now that he had became the student council president. In comparison prince Shaun's conquering event is less this year but will become more starting next year. Then excluding your highness, the conquerable 3rd year group... I mean the ex 3rd year group, Charles-sama, Bard-sama and Nert-sama has a little bit of event here and there since the rival noblewoman is still in the middle school division. I was busy preventing those event and i ended up unable to meet your highness." *(Bertia)*

To Bertia who's smiling from ear to ear with a prideful feeling, I didn't break my smile and answered with a [hnnn]

In the first place she just wouldn't interfere with [my event]

Rather than that it seems she's trying to push me to baroness Heronia

...Even though my fiancée is supposed Bertia, you...

Argh, why is it? Her actions are usually interesting, but this doesn't feel interesting at all.

On too if that, recently I'm even more irritated because 2 of the things that my friend told me.

Because of that, I asked her out for a food today.

"Come to think of it, Bertia it seems that you're getting along with Kulgan recently."  
(Cecil)

Kulgan who does his shadow training cum work, often come to my place to meet up.

He recently would ask on my opinion as he's troubled with Bertia while having an embarrassed face.

Everyday...

"Bertia... you requested to call kulgan as [Ku-aniki] didnt you?" (Cecil)

Almost everyday, she would come to the student council room and requested [Please let me call you ku-anisama ] to Kulgan with glittering eyes to Kulgan.

Recently, Kulgan would hold his head everytime he refused her and she started sulking like a small critter or when he see the illusion of a fox ear and tail on Bertia's back.

I'm pretty sure the fox ear and tails are not an illusion but Kuro standing behind Bertia. Since she stood right behind Bertia, she must have casted a spell to let people see her own tails and tails superimposed on Bertia as a prank.

I remembered the scenery as that pseudo girl like fox spirit made a prank on me without any expression.

"Yeah that is right. I mean instead of having a rival noblewoman interfering event, most of his event is his troubled event because of his sense of justice and my interfering event. But since now I'm only a distant relatives of his at this moment, it's hard to interfere with the heroine. Which is why, I figured I would just have to be in a

good sibling relationship with him, interfering with his event as a doted little sister!!! Besides even in my past life I have no elder brother or sister so I kind of like admire that kind of existence.” *(Bertia)*

“...I see” *(Cecil)*

I’m pretty sure the last part is her real intention though.

Her cheeks started to turn red as she speaks happily. She’s cute...

Now with this I finally understand why that serious kulgan would recently say [Erm, as a compromise can she please call me {Ku-anisama} instead?] with a slight expectation in it, while sending me an apologizing gaze.

But... as I thought this is not interesting.

”hey, Bertia. As my fiancée what do you think people will think when you started to call Kulgan who’s not even a close relative to you with such a familiar nickname?” *(Cecil)*

”Eh?” *(Bertia)*

“The people around would surely think that [even though Bertia. Evil. Nochesse-jyou is the crown prince’s fiancée, she’s also close with other man] or even [She’s a loose woman who’s thinking of cheating]” *(Cecil)*

“I, I have no intention to do such!!” *(Bertia)*

”Even if you might think so, the surrounding people wouldn’t necessarily interpret as that you know? As they exaggerate it further at the end it’ll become a really interesting thing. Even you who has finished your social debut would know how nasty the rumor in the social world is” *(Cecil)*

“No , I mean... I know” *(Bertia)*

I purposely show her a worrying expression and asked for her agreement while tilting my head. Bertia easily agreed to it.

Actually there are a lot of ways to go around this, and even if she started to call Kulgan as [Ku-anisama] I’m pretty sure her brilliant friends would brilliantly do their follow

ups.

But that is [not interesting] thus I think that this is the best solution(for me).

Ahh but at this rate, Bertia would feel really down and it's kind of sad...

"Hey, Bertia. If you want an elder brother so bad, you could even call me cecil-anisama if you want" (*Cecil*)

For a second her expression started to brighten up after having heard my words. Although she seems to have realized something and she started to shake her head.

"Your highness Cecil is your highness Cecil. You're my fi-fi-fiancé. You are not my brother." (*Bertia*)

She seems very embarrassed when mentioning [fiancé], and clearly stated that we're not of siblings relationship.

As soon as I hear those words, I feel that the irritating feeling inside me started to subsidize.

Such a weird feelings.

"Then in exchange you can just call me [Ceci]"

"Eh why did it become like that?"

"Because you looked so lonely. Besides you wanted to call kulgan as [ku-ani sama] right? Now let's try saying it"

"No, I-I mean for me [Your highness Cecil] is enough"

"hmm? is it better to call me [Ciel] rather than [Ceci]?"

"Nobody said anything about that!!" (*Bertia*)

"hnn?" (*Cecil*)

"No , I mean..."

“hnn?” *(Cecil)*

“I’ve been saying...”

“hnn?”

“.....”

“hnn?”

“.....iel-sama”

Continuing to tilt my head as I smiled, Bertia finally gave in and called me[Ciel-sama]

I could hear the slight [Ci] tone in it though. But in the end since no matter if she call me [Cecil] or [Ciel] it’s still way more friendly sounding than your highness.

If I can be greedy I wanted to her to call me without [sama] but that can wait until we’re married.

I need to leave some interesting things for later.

“Great job” *(Cecil)*

To the beet red Bertia I stretched my hand over the table and patted her head.

She was startled and leaked out a [mya] when I pat her head. Behind her, kuro moved her fox tail so it looked like Bertia has grown a tail and is wagging it.

...Kuro I don’t need that kind of service

As if saying [Is this good enough?], Kuro the small fox eared maid peeked out from behind Bertia with an expressionless face. I can only reply with a wry smile to that.

“Now then, lets get into the main topic” *(Cecil)*

I smiled while retrieving the hand I used to pat her head.

“Main topic...? I thought today is just me reporting for the preceding event while we have lunch?”

To the confused her, the thought of [ ah so she think it was because of that] popped in my mind and I shake my head slowly.

"Bertia, you have something that you haven't gave to me right?" *(Cecil)*

"Something I haven't gave to you? I wonder what that is" *(Bertia)*

Feigning ignorance is useless you know?

You do have something in mind don't you

Now, you're averting your eyes unnaturally.

Ah just now, she retracted her chest a bit.

So that's where it is. Since the slightly long chain with the necklace that i gave to her is dropping down, i think that's where it is.

"Although you gave it to the others, I as your fiance didn't get anything. Aren't you a bit cold? When I heard about this from Charles and the others, I was sad." *(Cecil)*

"T-That's not it. It's just that I don't think that you need it... besides I was too full of myself and the design is..."

hnn so its not needed by me huh...

Furthermore is there anything with the design?

I see

"Since i need it, can i have it?"

"Eh? your highness wait a se..."

Turning turning my depressed expression to the usual smile, I stretched my body and quickly pull out the chain hung at her neck.

Of course I do that carefully so that she wont feel any discomfort.

"It's inside here right? my... no our share"



I pulled out the pendant that's hidden in her cleavage that has grown into quite a sight.

It's setup like a watch with a lid, as I pressed the upper part of it, the lid opened immediately with a gachin sound. I took out 2 earrings from inside.

"Yo, Your highnessss!!"

"Ah I apologize, keeping this posture must be hard on you."

Getting my objective, I closed the now empty pendant, and tried to return it back to her cleavage using my hands... I do think of doing that, but Zeno and the maids standing behind started coughing at the same time so I gave up and just let go of the necklace.

I do with they let me do such a little thing... Oh well it's already far out of the gentleman's code so I can't really complain about it.

"Yeah this looks beautiful"

The two earrings hung up in respectively.

In front of me there's Bertia, beet-red as if steam is coming out from her, sulking and taking small sips on the tea.

Leaving that aside.

Both of the piercings are identical in shape but totally different in colors.

One of them is a bigger red colored stone surrounded by small navy colored stone.

Another one is a bigger milk-tea colored stone surrounded by amber colored stone

And below each of those 2 stones, it is connected with a red chain as if binding those two stones together.

Hmm so it's each of our eye color and hair color with a red chain(red strings of fate).

She does think of a very cute thing sometimes.

"If I recalled it correctly, the other guys only have a simple design with a single stone

filled with [dark element protective power] right? The color is the same as this one though as they represent their own partner's color."

"I mean... since your highness will be together with the heroine, there is no need for a protection for her light power. Besides, we're only engaged temporarily that's why I thought there is no need to give it to you..... Since I can't really give it to you, I thought i might as well make the design to look a little bit hurt... elaborate.

Bertia tried to make an excuse as she sulkingly put her fingers inside the teacup and swirl the insides.

...I've been saying this but Kuro, there is no need for you to portray her feelings and superimpose a set back ear on her head.

I have to admit that it's cute but it's a needless option.

"So Bertia feels fine even if my behavior became something like a drug addict?"

"That is absolutely unallowed!! Because your highness is your highness that you're lovely." *(Bertia)*

"Then, you should protect me so i can keep being me. So i could by my own will find the girl that i liked" *(Cecil)*

"Of course!! I will stake my pride as a first rate villainess and protect you so that you can decide it on your own!" *(Bertia)*

"Okay then, I'll be having this" *(Cecil)*

"Yes please feel free to take it. It's just that the design is a bit..." *(Bertia)*

"Ah... Certainly, if worn by a single person this looked like a little heavy as an unrequited love. That's why Bertia should wear half of this earring. That way this won't feel like unrequited love anymore."

"I see! I understand, leave it to me!" *(Bertia)*

"Alright, come here I'll put it on your ear" *(Cecil)*

"Okay" *(Bertia)*

With a fast paced tempo of conversation, I didn't gave her the time to think and proceeded to talk. I put the milk tea with amber colored earrings on her.

As soon as I did that, I muttered [Zeno] with my usual smile. His expression is reluctant as he cast a magic to do as I intended to.

Feeling the signal, Kuro's hair stood up. She must have noticed the magic and stared at me.

"Kuro? What happened?" *(Bertia)*

Noticing how unusual Kuro behaves, Bertia with her perplexed expression looked back and forth between Kuro and me.

As she did that, I quickly put the red and navy stoned earrings and asked Zeno to finish the task by casting the same magic.

"Don't worry, She just reacted because I asked zeno to cast some magic" *(Cecil)*

"Magic? What kind of magic is it?" *(Bertia)*

"hmm? It's a magic with an earth element to fix the position of the earrings, making it unable unequip, so that we won't lose such an important earrings and water magic so that the earrings will always be clean."

"Eh?Huh? Unable to unequip you say... ... Ehhhh?!" *(Bertia)*

"By this, it looks like we're mutually loving each other, and I don't get to be branded as a sad man with un required love." *(Cecil)*

"That is great... wait just a minute!! Looking like mutually loving? this makes us like an idiot-couple!! If it's worn by a single person, we still can make an excuse of being [coincidence]. But wearing a same pattern like this, there is no way that excuse will work." *(Bertia)*

With a time lag, her mind finally starts working and she finally noticed it. I laughed sheepishly while looking at her.

Yeah, this is fun.

"It's appealing that we're both a couple tied by fate. Isn't it interesting and good?"  
(Cecil)

"That is not good at all! The heroine will become angry!! She'll end up going for another route instead" (*Bertia*)

"You don't have to worry, after all baronness heronia has a (persistent until the level of annoying) strong will." (*Cecil*)

"Still, there is still the chance of it happening!! Kuro take it off... eh? You can't take it off? Zeno is way stronger?" (*Bertia*)

Without any expression from kuro, she silently pointed at Zeno making Bertia even more flustered.

"Then Zeno-sama, please take it off!" (*Bertia*)

"I deeply apologize Bertia sama. If I disobey my master he'll be very scary later... I mean a servant couldn't go against their master's wishes." (*Zeno*)

Pulling his back straight, Zeno apologized with all of his heart as he bowed. His gaze is totally averted from Bertia though.

"Yo, your highness!!" (*Bertia*)

"It's Ciel right, tia?" (*Cecil*)

"Saying such a thing at this timing, such an incredible destructive power... That's not it!! There's something wrong with this." (*Bertia*)

"Ah, it's about time for the afternoon class. My adorable tia, we'll meet again tommorow at lunch here okay?" (*Cecil*)

"Alright!... wait a second, this is really wrong! Why would our atmosphere be something of a sweet loving couple?! Your highne... Ciel-sama, are you teasing me?"  
(*Bertia*)

I squinted my eyes when she called me[your highness], as I do she corrected her speech immediately. Bertia is really honest.

nn? It's not like I'm threatening her with my gaze you know?

"You think too much... well then, I got to go." *(Cecil)*

I overtalked a little since being with Bertia is so much fun.

Actually if I didn't hurry it up, I might be late to the meeting.

"Bertia don't be late alright?" *(Cecil)*

"Your hi... Ciel sama, Listen to me! Please take off this earrings" *(Bertia)*

Behind me, it seems like Bertia is saying something, I don't really heed to it and left the place.

As a crown prince of a kingdom, unless there is a special reason there is no way I am going to be late.

"Ciel-sama!!!!" *(Bertia)*

It feels good to hear Bertia calling my name from behind.

As I expect, talking with her directly is a lot more fun rather than hearing it from other.

Without noticing it, the feeling of [Irritated] and [Unsatisfied] was gone without me noticing.

# Chapter 9

## Bertia (15 years old)

“Brother, Please do something about her!!” *(Shaun)*

“Shaun is that the first thing you tell me after I have returned from a long trip?I’d hoped it to be at least a {Welcome back} instead” *(Cecil)*

During my second year, due to my father, I took a 4 months break during the spring, going to our neighbouring country in order to establish good relations under the pretense of an educational exchange.

Father told me to just do my own things and that would be a good restraint to other companies. Thinking that such a naive way of thinking wouldn’t work, As to not waste the 4 months I’m staying there, Whilst travelling, I gathered information and spread the baits on the import tax and the road maintenance fees. With that, I blackmailed... Negotiated with a favorable conditions.

At first nobody would pay heed to words from a child such as me and there are also people who just brushed me aside. Although when I started using the information I gathered as a topic, their faces started to turn pale whilst listening to me seriously.

I finally realized that humans are surprisingly sensible creatures as long as you sincerely converse with each other.

Well although before you’re able to sincerely converse with each other you would need to lay some foundation and investigation.

Various things happened and I have returned back to the academy according to schedule, and instead of welcoming me, the first thing my Brother was to rant... Since I haven’t received any sitrep from my “House sitter” I have no idea on what’s going on currently.

Of course I have received periodic reports, but since our country’s territory is wide, It takes time to receive information on the capital when I’m in the neighbouring countries. The information i can get would also be limited and i wouldn’t be able to

hear any recent news.

“...Did Bertia do something interesting again?”

It's rare for my nonchalant brother to be this flustered

the last report from the “House sitter” includes the plan to making Shaun involved on the preparation of the cultural festival, but even so, I heard there wasn't too much interesting movement from her.

“It's not about lady Bertia but Baronnes Heronia”

Looking at Shaun who furrowed his brow unpleasantly, I remembered about the girl who's only good for her average look.

By the way, instead of being one of my target of interest or protection, She's more like someone annoying pest that i thought i should remove thus I have little to none information about her.

I just recognize her as [someone acquainted] to my close aides and Bertia.

“Shaun, I'm sorry but baroness Heronia is out of my jurisdiction” (*Cecil*)

I declined Shaun who came to ask for my help as if it's the normal thing to do.

“Can i ask why?” (*Shaun*)

“I'm the one who wanted to ask why you would ask me for help”

“It's because everyone's been saying that you would take care of all the problems as long as someone asked you”

“...I'm very curious on who is that [everyone] you're referring to” (*Cecil*)

“That lady Joanna is feeling restless now. She's very hurt because she's been told by baroness heronia that [You're too uptight and are not worthy of prince Shaun]. Furthermore She told me while crying that seeing me being proactively approached by baroness Heronia made her feel scared that my feeling would change. Seeing her who's always looking so capable becoming like this made my heart hurt. I thought that i need to do something to protect her...” (*Shaun*)

Ignoring everything i've said, Shaun grasped his fist with a tinge of teardrop on his eyes.

His resolve to protect her is pretty praiseworthy, but relying on me?

Unlike the perfect and un-cute first prince me, Shaun the second prince was pampered by the adults as he's unable to do things perfectly.

That's why, It might be un-inevitable that the unreliable and pampered him would ask for help from someone... but i still think it's very shameful as a man to do so.

Well he is way better than last time since lady Joanna who's educating him had already known the tricks to handle him and had him dancing on top of her hand since then.

As of why, the Shaun from before would think that it's a given that he should be protected and would never think of protecting anyone.

"If so Shaun, You should try to protect her by yourself. You are the middle schooler's student council president and this country's 2nd prince... besides lady Joanna is your lover too." *(Cecil)*

Shaun who looked frustrated while biting his lower lips since he didn't know how to protect lady Joanna suddenly noticed something was amiss and was surprised.

"Esteemed brother, did you know about our relationship? It's only been 2 days that we've been going out... as expected from esteemed brother." *(Shaun)*

His originally wide eyes went wider as he looked at me suspiciously.

Do I know anything about Shaun and lady Joanna being together?

Of course there's no way i would know that they already went out.

It's just somehow i feel that the passionate feelings dwelled in Shaun's eyes are close to that of being in love. That's why i tried to hint it out... hnnn I see so they finally went out together.

With this there's no more problem on Shaun's fiancée.

"From now on as a fiancée and partner, you both would be a pillar to our country.



There would be lots of trials too. Would you still be asking me for assistance every-time you meet such trials?

If so you won't be able to protect your loved one and this country"

Shaun can't always be the pampered kid he is, it's about time for him to get his act together.

Then i should act accordingly and be strict towards him.

After all I'm his [Elder brother]

"But instead of someone like me won't things resolve better if someone like you did it...?" (*Shaun*)

"If so you won't be able to experience anything thus unable to grow. Besides the one who wanted to protect lady Joanna from baroness Heronia is you right? Are you willing to let another guy be the one to protect her?"

"That... is a little..." (*Shaun*)

Imagining it, Shaun's face started to worry unbefitting of his childlike face.

"All the more so, isn't this the time to show your manliness? She is counting on you right now as your lover you know? How about trying to protect her in your own way. If that doesn't work out it's alright to ask for my advice" (*Cecil*)

With this, I hope Shaun will mature.

Even like this, Shaun did all of his work as the student council president perfectly and he seems to be good at his studies.

His abilities are in itself marvelous, all that he needs is just confidence and the resolve to do it when the time comes.

Besides, even if he failed I can salvage the situation, and lady Joanna seems to be leading the situation so i'm sure she'll be able to do some follow ups.

Especially since this case is something that lady Joanna has set up as his homework.

I'm sure there is already a plan B put in place.

After all she's good enough to make me want her as my subordinate.

"B... But..." (*Shaun*)

"But?" (*Cecil*)

In my opinion, it's ridiculous to be worried about this "homework" which has already been planned out perfectly for him to solve. But since Shaun has not noticed this, he must still be feeling uneasy to solve this on his own.

To a certain part of females, his uneasiness might seem "cute and charismatic" but as a prince of a country, i wonder about that.

I furrowed my brow while waiting for him to continue.

Shaun who looked like a small puppy being scolded, peeked at my expressions with upturned eyes as he opened his mouth slowly.

"Even i have paid attention numerous times and tried my best to keep my distance from her, but she never listened. Insisting that she is the best candidate to join the student council, she kept looking down and pester lady Joanna and the other noblewoman, whilst acting like she is some kind of damsel in distress and cried in front of the onlookers... Especially it got much worse during the times you're absent. I tried my best to smooth things over everytime, but with some retarded reasoning, she made it look like i'm actually on her side. It made me to don't know what is right anymore."

I feel relieved to see Shaun with tears on the edge of his eyes did actually tried his best to solve the situation in his own way.

From what i heard from Bertia, This year's number one target seems to be Shaun. I'm sure he's in a similar position to the me 2 years ago.

No, from what i deduced from Shaun's story, The more things happened outside of the scenario, the more troublesome things get.

Because Shaun has that soft side on him, he [ignoring], [eluding], [not associating] is not an option. He should be quite racking his brain on how to deal with her.

“Besides, Elder brother, it’s not completely unrelated to you, you know? After all the no. 1 target of her attack seems to be lady Bertia. Lady Joanna might look strict, but she’s kind on the inside. Even though she is troubled with her own problems, when she looks at Bertia her heart aches more. I couldn’t stand looking at her being heartstricken like that.

“...Bertia is the main target of her attack? how did things become like that?”

As soon as I hear Bertia’s name, my brow twitched a little.

It’s that baroness Heronia that has been meddling with a lot of noble ladies we’re talking about right here.

Of course she’ll be meddling with the self-proclaimed [Villainess], but I never expected it to be especially bad for Bertia.

I overlooked that a little

Bertia is my fiancée and of course is within my [Jurisdiction].

You should protect your beloved yourselves. Shaun who tried his best to do so but with no avail started to lighten his expression once I started to lend an ear to him.

I’m sorry to disappoint you but, I’ll be lending a hand to his [Homework].

Even so it is only to the point that Shaun could protect his lover himself and I can ascertain the situation of my fiancée and help if it is needed.

In the first place, lady Joanna could possibly take care of someone like baroness Heronia as easy as grasping her hand, but instead of doing that, she used such a roundabout way and asked help from Shaun by giving him this [Homework].

If I take care of things perfectly, instead of being happy, she would be extremely furious.

“I may not know what the reason is, but I’ve heard that various rumours about Lady Bertia destroying baroness Heronia’s belongings; looking down on her; asking the other lady to isolate her; and being corrupted like her father marquis Nochesse; being spread around.

“Not [Spread around ] but [Being spread around] ?” *(Cecil)*

*(TN :I may not have phrased it properly but shaun said that someone is spreading the rumour instead of the rumour spreading by mouth to mouth.)*

“Yes, it’s [Being spread around]” *(Shaun)*

...Doesn’t that mean that she tried to spread bad rumours about Bertia, but got found out and now it became a rumour?

She is just digging her own grave...

What are you actually trying to achieve, baroness Heronia...

“Lady Bertia is actually very famous among the middle schoolers. And those who admire her started to have negative impression on lady Heronia. Especially the member’s of [Bertia loving society]. They are enraged and the friction with baroness Heronia is getting more and more common..... and the person on top of that is lady Joanna.

Lady Joanna sure is aggressive for someone who cried for being distressed...

I’m sure, her character setting in front of Shaun is [Although i’m afraid, i tried to act tough].

Well nevertheless, during the times of my absence, quite a lot of troubles did happen in the middle school section.

On top of that, Bertia is in the middle of all of that... I might need to observe the situation and gather some information on this.

“I see... hmmm then, I’ll be taking a look. Like Shaun who’s protecting lady Joanna, i also need to protect my own fiancée” *(Cecil)*

Shaun heaved a sigh of relief.

Seeing that, i might need to give him some warnings.

“But, i’ll only help on [problems related to Bertia]. I say it again, you need to protect your own lovers. Besides it is also the student council’s job to settle dispute between

students. Shaun is already not on the side who needs protection anymore so you need to get your act together.” *(Cecil)*

I erased my smile and stared at Shaun seriously.

Shaun who relaxed started fidgeting.

He looked determined, and replied with a [Yes].

Yeah, he has a good expression on him now.

He started to look like a [Man] now.

OchHDF-san: ~Oh my gawd Shaun is growing up.

“Now then, since i need to pack things up, let’s just leave it at here today.” *(Cecil)*

Sending a glance behind, my attendant have stopped their hands due to the second prince visiting.

In the first place, there is no need for me as the crown prince to tidy my things up, but since someone with a high nobility have visited, my attendant’s can’t continue their work.

As long as Shaun is here, there is no way that they could tidy up this room.

“I’m sorry to trouble you when you have just gotten back, Esteemed Brother” *(Shaun)*

Having got a little leeway, Shaun looked at our surroundings and smiled wryly.

“No problem, i also am happy to see you after so long” *(Cecil)*

“Oh yeah...” *(Shaun)*

“Is there anything else?” *(Cecil)*

“Esteemed brother, welcome back. I’ve been waiting for your safe return” *(Shaun)*

I smiled to reply.

“Yeah, i’m back. I’m glad that you’re doing fine too” *(Cecil)*



...now then, what should i do.

Now that i’ve finished tidying up my belongings, send my greetings to teachers and my parents, I should start to think about the Bertia and baroness Heronia’s trifle.

After that, from the [House sitter], i’ve heard that things are progressing as Shaun described and baroness Heronia is doing something stupid towards Bertia.

But instead of people avoiding her, there are a certain group of students who keep supporting her and things have been worsening.

Although unlike Bertia who has people following her because of her own charisma, from the information i got, people only follow baroness Heronia because of the power of her light spirit.

Regarding this, i think it is better to have a solution as soon as possible.

In theory, nothing good will ever happens if you are involved with something occult (not human).

For now, i think i should listen to it directly from Bertia.

I also feel like I haven’t saw her in a while.

“Zeno, Could you deliver this to Bertia?” *(Cecil)*

I gave the prepared bouquet and the lunch invitation letter to Zeno.

Zeno properly bowed and left the room.



I received Bertia’s reply almost immediately.

Because of the preparation of the [Cultural festival], I’ve heard that she’s quite busy so I thought that it might take some time but it seems that she did made some time

beforehand because she had heard of my returning schedule.

And then the awaited time has finally come.

Even if i say so, it's the usual lunch at the saloon though...

Even so, since it's been a long time since i saw her interesting actions, i became excited without realizing it.

During my exchange program i've been surrounded by straightforward people and to be honest, it's really boring.

It felt like i was gonna get bored to death.

"You, Just cut it out already!! Do you know how much trouble someone like you brought to Bertia sama? To put it bluntly, Don't put your hands on someone with a lover or fiancée. Don't you know Shame?!" (??)

On my way to meet Bertia on the saloon, suddenly i heard the scream of a woman. I naturally turned my sight towards the source.

It's on the corner of the garden we pass to reach the saloon.

In the midst of student's enjoying their food, there is a table that has been giving out different vibes.

There are about 3 noble ladies surrounding a woman that's sitting on a chair while holding her teacup.

And that woman is... Ah it is baroness Heronia after all...

On her table, there is about two more male classmates sitting.

I tried my best to remember who they are...

He should be a rather quite popular student that looks good and has a decent noble rank.

And If i'm not mistaken, he is the fiancée of the lady screaming at baroness Heronia.

Looking from the sidelines, it's a perfect carnage of a triangle relationship.

But, somehow the first thing that the screaming lady spoke is not about her fiance merrily having a lunch with baroness Heronia...

"I did told you to complete and submit the documents i handed over to you by the end of last week. It's about the distribution of roles on the [cultural festival]. You haven't forgotten about it right?" (??)

"Wa , What are you talking about? I didn't receive anything like that." (*Heronia*)

"Don't Lie! It's a paper distributed from the student council!! I've told you countless times to not forgot about it. The only one who hasn't submitted is you!! Do you know how much trouble you've caused the student council?" (??)

"T, That's why I've been saying, I don't know anything about this. Ah!! Maybe it's lady Bertia that's trying to pull a prank on me..." (*Heronia*)

"Wha!! What are you even saying? Lady Bertia is no such person! Throwing away your responsibility like that to other people... You're the worst!" (??)

"That's not... I'm just..." (*Heronia*)

With tears in her eyes, baroness Heronia started to act scared.

And the two students who are trying to console her

Those two students, Their eyes look a little blank...

When I squint my eyes, the bird resting upon baroness Heronia's shoulder started to give a mysterious aura.

It's not to an extent of a powerful magic, but it does emit little mental interferences waves.

Even at this situation, the guy's still looked at baroness Heronia with an unusually happy expression. They looked like they're one step away from drug addiction.

Well, it's not really a strong mental interference, as long as they get away from her, they should return to normal in to time.



“How cruel... Even when I don’t know anything...” (*Heronia*)

The silently weeping lady, the boys hugging to console her, and the ladies that are glaring at them from above.

At a glance, it might looked like a crying victim and the perpetrator who’s staring at her.

Actually though, the one’s that hugging her are the fiancée of the one’s staring, and the student’s having lunch around are having [What the hell is that girl talking about] vibes while watching them. I’m sure there are also a lot of people who witnessed her taking the documents.

The girl’s around baroness Heronia, started to support her and expressing their discontent towards Bertia.

In contrast to that, baroness Heronia with tears welling in her eyes, refuted saying that it’s all Bertia’s fault and insisted that she herself is the victim.

...It’s not a nice scenery to watch.

It might be the same to the surrounding students, other than the measly student supporting baroness Heronia, they all looked at her with cold gazes and furrowed brows.

Now then, it’s about time to stop looking at this farce.

After this, there is the long awaited lunch with Bertia after all.

I overlooked the whole situation from behind a tree to not let other student’s notice that i’m observing baroness Heronia.

When I tried to escape from that place, suddenly...

“What’s all this fuss about?”

A clear voice reverberated on the garden.

The surrounding started to quieten.

There, the figures of lady Silica and lady Cynthia together with Bertia appeared. そこには、シー

Bertia who got her name called by one of the noblewoman looked at her with discontent and furrowed her brows... with her eyes full of satisfaction.

...I'm sure she's thinking [ Don't I resemble a villainess? Aren't I amazing? As expected from me!]

On the other hand, Lady Cynthia and Lady Silica stared at baroness Heronia with a stern expression.

It is annoying enough to have her meddling with their fiancée and now she even tried make their friend a villain.

No matter how she looked like a victim... No It's because she looked like a victim that it made them furious.

“Heronia-sama, so it's you again.” (*Silica*)

With a sharp tone, Silica voiced out.

“We are already at the last year of middle school. Isn't it time for you to learn your manners as a noble?” (*Cynthia*)

Hiding her mouth behind a fan, Cynthia with an annoyed voice sighed.

With the [ I hate her] aura coming out from the two, the air seemed to have grown cold.

“Silica sama, and Cynthia sama... I haven't done anything, but these people started to...” (*Heronia*)

I wonder if she realized that saying such things when clinging to the chest of someone's fiancée has no credibility at all

Sure enough, the face of the girls surrounding baroness Heronia turned grim.

“Bertia sama, Silica sama, Cynthia sama, I argued because she wouldn’t submit the required documents. Since that might cause inconvenience for the student council, my anger got the better of me...” (random girl A)

With the appearance of Bertia, the girls have calmed down somewhat. Looking at the situation at a glance makes them look like the bad guys so they tried frantically to justify themselves.

I couldn’t believe that the main reason of the fight was not because of [trying to lay a hand to their fiance] but because of [Might have troubled Bertia and the others]. But I was convinced once I looked carefully at the desperate girls, they have that cold look on their eyes that seems to say [ We’ve given up on our fiance].

“Bertia-sama, this all must have been plotted by you. How could you do such a cruel thing to me.”

Weeping profusely, Baroness Heronia stood up from the seat and glared at Bertia.

Did she just say something that has no relevance to the preceding talk...?

Maybe it just happens that I couldn’t understand it. If I use all my might to interpret it, i might understand that Bertia plotted everything out.

Nah, I’m probably not the only one who has that thought. Look, the surrounding students are tilting their heads and send doubtful looks at Baroness Heronia.

The bird riding on her shoulder, flies off and try to release some light attribute magic to brainwash everyone. Noticing that Kuro waved his tail to hinder it with dark element magic.

In the midst of rising anger towards Baroness Heronia, Lady Silica and Cynthia stood in front of Bertia to protect her and said [Enough with your excuses].

Even with the sharp glances from the gallery, baroness Heronia keeps acting like a victim as if not noticing the atmosphere.

Such a joke.

“Please wait a second”

A cool sound reverberated clearly amongst the sighing.

All of the gazes went towards Bertia.

Straightening her back and with the attitude of a haughty noble, Bertia walked to the front.

After sending a sharp stare to Baroness Heronia, She glanced around as if to take control of the surrounding.

The girl's idolizing Bertia looked at her nervously to watch over her, While Bertia herself was having that satisfied face as if she's done it

Now, what would happen?

I retracted the steps i took and decided to look over the situation for a little bit longer.

Of course, I only was interested in what Bertia would do after this.

If, things started to go sideways, I just need to intervene.

"Bertia sama, do you wish to further inflict pain towards me?" (*Heronia*)

For someone who acts scared, her eyes sure look provoking.

She really isn't suited to be an actress. Even when she needed to act as a damsel in distress, she still looked at Bertia with anger and arrogance. (something like looking from above, any idea to improve this?)

You don't feel an ounce of urge to protect her.

"My... How rude of you to talk to Bertia-sama like that." (??)

"Aren't you the ones who are troubling and making it harder for Bertia-sama?" (???)

When it seems like the conflict between baroness Heronia and Bertia's Support is restarting, Bertia screamed [STOP!!].

Feeling lonely when her place to shine was taken, Bertia with tears in her eyes said.

“Li-Listen to what I’m saying!! I don’t like being ignored!” (*Bertia*)

To Bertia who pleaded wholeheartedly, all the noblewoman apologized and straighten their posture to listen properly.

When the center of attention shifted to Bertia, Baroness Heronia murmured [even though I’m supposed to be the heroine] with a displeased face.

By the way, of course I couldn’t hear what baroness Heronia is saying.

I just used lip-reading and tried to interpret what she’s saying.

“Heronia-sama is my prey! That’s why I won’t let anyone interfere. Bullying is also no good! I will deal with it myself. Doing it sneakily from the back is what a third rate (*villain*) will do. If you want to do it, you must do it from the front! That is what I would call a first rate (*villain*)” (*Bertia*)

“How could you...” (*Heronia*)

“As expected from Bertia-sama” (???)

“Eh?” (*Bertia*)

“I understand, no matter what is being done to you, if you only retaliate sneakily, you’re just a third rate [lady]” (???)

“huh...?” (*Bertia*)

“Furthermore, to not let us be blinded by unsightful rage and envy, I can’t believe you would choose to confront her by yourself is just...” (???)

“No i mean...” (*Bertia*)

“On top of that, even when she had made you go through rough times, to think that you would confront her yourself to protect her from this many to one situation... What a merciful lady...” (???)

Against Bertia’s declaration of war, when baroness Heronia thought that things would finally go her way, for some reason the noble ladies started to praise Bertia.

Bertia who acted like a normal first rate villain, is confused with the sudden increase in popularity.

How amusing.

I expected no less from my fiancé.

“Wait a minute, something’s wrong with this development, Isn’t this the place where everyone is pitying me and protect me?”

The perfectly isolated baroness Heronia, screamed furiously in anger.

I think’s it’s more impossible to be pitied when you’re surrounded by enemy alone in enemy grounds.

After you’ve attacked the enemy general, I don’t think anyone would listen when you tell everyone that [I attacked because she’s bad], [I’m the victim], [I’m pitiful].

When you failed to become the perfect victim, baroness Heronia’s plan had already fell apart.

And the best way to get out from this completely disadvantageous situation is to quickly [Escape].

Maybe, if a royalty were to lend a hand to her, she would get away with a draw, but starting with me, even Shaun viewed her as an enemy and it would be impossible to lend her a hand.

Thus the only choice left for her is only to escape.

But she didn’t take that choice.

Without concealing her rage, she stared at Bertia.

Then...

“In the first place, everything is your fault!! If you’re trying to be a villain then act like a proper hated villain!! Why the hell did you gather the rival ladies and became popular! On top of that you also helped the rival ladies to make up with the conquerable targets, and having lunch happily with Prince Cecil! Really you’ve done

nothing but troubles for me!" (*Heronia*)

"Eh? But I did my part properly towards Prince Cecil..." (*Bertia*)

"In the first place, you know it right? Excluding the other conquerable targets, your precious prince Cecil won't be happy unless he's paired with me. Only i can save prince Cecil. A villainess like you could only make him suffer! If you understand, then don't stand in my way." (*Heronia*)

"aa..." (*Bertia*)

As if looking at unknown things, the surrounding couldn't understand what baroness Heronia's saying.

But, the only one that understand, Bertia couldn't voice a reply and bit her lower mouth with a hurtful expression.

Bertia always wanted me to be hooked with the [heroine] to gain my happiness.

I always felt that Bertia has a feeling towards me somewhat, and even if it's a setting from an [Otome game], I couldn't understand how she kept recommending me to her love rival.

Since I'm not attracted to the [Heroine], she should just pair the [heroine] with the other love targets and keep being my fiancée

...But, from what I've heard from baroness Heronia, unknown to me, it seems that there is a reason that I must be connected to her.

Is that reason also set by the [Otome game]?

However, from how things proceeds until now, isn't that also a changeable fate?

Bertia would always say [The counter Force] and would give up on things easily, but to me it seems that the [counter force] is not working.

If it's me, wouldn't there be a way to resist?

I hurriedly stopped my thoughts that have run wild without noticing.

Now is not the time to have idle thoughts.

Gripping her dress tightly, Bertia couldn't withstand anymore of baroness Heronia's lashing.

Not understanding anything, the gallery are thus unable to help Bertia and they keep staring at baroness Heronia

"You're just someone to serve as my foil, a third rate villainess that can't be a rival. If you're unhappy then everyone will be happy. If you relinquish that role, prince Cecil could never be happy. His happiness will be taken by you. You will never replace me, I mean after all I'm the [Fated girl]." (*Heronia*)

Not losing to the staring of everyone, Baroness Heronia snapped.

For everyone who doesn't know what the [Otome game] means, it's just a rambling of an insane person. But it's not the case for Bertia.

"....." (*Bertia*)

[I understand]

Probably there is no one that heard that. Bertia gritted her teeth as hard as possible and murmured that out with tears falling from her eyes.

I can't explain how furious I am when I heard it.

I can't look at this any longer.

I might like to observe Bertia, but I don't want to see her like this.

I need to hug her now and tell her that [Everything's going to be alright]

Before my head started to work, my legs have moved.

But before I did, there's someone faster than me.

"FUSYAA!" (*Kuro*)



Unable to stand the sufferings of Bertia any longer, her spirit Kuro stood in front of Bertia and howled with all her hair standing.

To a normal people, they would only see that a maid clothed youth... Bertia's youth standing in front of her master to protect her.

But to someone who can see the spirits like me, it's a really dangerous situation.

Around Kuro, there's a black thunder crackling everywhere.

It's to the point that there's no surprise if it struck baroness Heronia.

The surrounding also felt dark and there is this static feeling in the air that touched the skin (you know that kind of static you feel)

The only saving grace is that this is just a [Threaten]

That's why all the students who couldn't see the spirit didn't notice the true identity of Kuro.

"....."

The usual calm Kuro is staring at baroness Heronia.

That un-usuality makes baroness Heronia startled but not frightened.

I'm sure she is unable to see the spirits.

That's why she didn't know that she's in a grave danger.

In exchange, her spirits are in disarray and tried to protect her.

But the difference in power between them is visible.

"Zeno, I'll leave Kuro to you" (*Cecil*)

"As you will" (*Zeno*)

Hastening my steps, I rushed to Bertia's side. Zeno released some of his power and contained Kuro's magic.

“Bertia... Bertia... Tia!!” *(Cecil)*

Reacting to my voice, Bertia raised her head.

My figure is visible in her teary and uneasy eyes.

Seeing that figure I realized.

She was scared that i'll blame her for being in this place.

It contradict with her usual state where she would talk to me about her plans to break our engagements.

I felt a gap from her current figure that's afraid of being hated by me

Maybe that's the feeling I'm looking from her.

“Cecil sama...” *(Bertia)*

Hugging her... Is certainly a bad idea in front of everyone. I hold her hand that's still grasping the hem of her skirt and gently smiled at her.

Telling her that everything's going to be alright.

“Tia, I'm worried since you didn't show up at the appointed time. What happened?”  
*(Cecil)*

I send a blank look to Kuro who seem to say [ Okay the threatening is done] whilst in Zeno's hand.

Ah... so Kuro did notice that I'm observing from nearby.

“Erm... no, , ,” *(Bertia)*

“Prince Cecil, Without me noticing, I've angered Bertia-sama and then...” *(Heronia)*

...How unpleasant.

This is the first time I've been this angry.

“I don’t know who and where you come from but i’m not talking to you. Besides don’t touch me as you please. You might not know but I’m one of the royalties. If you don’t keep the minimum manners with me, at worst you’ll be charged with lésé majesté.”  
(Cecil)

As I smiled, she hurriedly let go of my hand and send a glaring look at Bertia.

To shield Bertia from baroness Heronia’s stare, I cut my way to her vision and hold Bertia’s shaking shoulder.

Hugging in front of everyone might be bad, however holding her shoulder to escort her should be no problem.

It might be my imagination that Bertia’s maid’s stare is painful.

“Lady Cynthia, lady Silica, after this I have a lunch appointment with her, can I take her away now?”

I confirm my will to the both of Bertia’s followers, They replied me with a brilliant smile.

“Cecil-sama, it’s no good. The heroine is here. You must protect the heroine. If you didn’t you won’t become happy.” (Bertia)

Sending a conflicted look to me, Bertia said that with a voice less energetic than what i used to hear.

I silenced her with a smile.

“Rather than that, what’s important now is to have food. Let’s leave the place. That way this place would have it’s peace back and there will be no one to hurt you. I don’t want to leave you here.” (Cecil)

I smiled to Bertia even though my voice has naturally become deeper.

I could hear a sigh from the surrounding and the sound of Baroness Heronia gritting her teeth, but i ignored all of them and keep looking at the uneasy Bertia.

“Sorry, Bertia. Even to the disheartened you, now i don’t feel like playing along with your [Game].” (Cecil)

Not understanding what I mean, I told the confused her [it's nothing]

“Ah, by the way, I did buy a few souvenirs. I don't know if it suits your taste though”

As soon as we left the garden, I changed the topic and whispered into Bertia's ears. Finally she let out a smile.

“There are snacks?!” (*Bertia*)

“I only bought things that can be kept for a few days”

“Wow, I'll look forward to it” (*Bertia*)

I patted Bertia's head.

Behind, the maid is coughing violently, and Kuro who is held by Zeno, keep hitting my back with his tail as if to say [I don't allow any more than this].

“Your highness Cecil...” (*Bertia*)

“What?” (*cecil*)

I implied with my eyes that I don't want to hear anything about [Heroine] and the [otome game].

I wondered what she might say, but noticing my eyes, she briefly closed her mouth and smiled.

“...Welcome back, I've been eagerly waiting for your return.”

“I'm back, Bertia, I've been looking forward to see you again” (*Cecil*)

I Replied that smile with a smile feeling all the tension leaving my shoulder.



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